Interview with James McCargar

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

JAMES McCARGAR

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Today is the 18th of April of 1995. This is an interview with James McCargar. It's being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I'm Charles Kennedy.

Q: Could we start by your telling me a bit about your early background? Something about your family, when you were born, where you grew up.

McCARGAR: I was born in 1920, a year which now seems beyond the ken of most of the current population; we didn't have VCRs.

I was born and brought up in San Francisco. I went to public schools there.

Q: Your parents?

McCARGAR: My mother died 10 days after I was born. My father was a banker, one of the principal figures at the time in San Francisco's Crocker Bank. In 1927 or 1928, he left the Bank, describing himself thereafter in Who's Who as an “industrialist” — a term since fallen out of use. He was on a number of boards of directors. He was also President of the company that built the first bridge across San Francisco Bay — a good distance south of

the City, at the Dumbarton strait, or narrows. It no longer exists. He was closely tied up with shipping in San Francisco and with Hawaiian interests.

Q: Matson Lines, Dole, that sort of thing?

McCARGAR: The Matson Lines, yes, Dole, no. In place of the latter was the Irwin Estate Company and Foundation. The Irwins were one of the six “missionary” families in the Islands. Paul Fagan, who was the son of my father's close friend and banking colleague, James Fagan, after whom I was named, had married Helene Irwin. Paul Fagan became President of the Irwin Estate Company and Foundation, and in due course my father became a principal advisor there. The Foundation did a lot of charitable work, but the Estate Company of course had considerable properties, both in the Islands and in California. Among the latter was the San Francisco baseball team of that day. In his later years, my father was always going to baseball games. I once asked him “Where did this baseball enthusiasm come from?” (I did so because he was a great golfer; I'd never heard him talk baseball.) He said simply that Paul Fagan was very enthusiastic about the team — leaving it to me to understand that that meant that he too was therefore an enthusiast.

Q: He was looking after his interests.

McCARGAR: I got the point. But there was more to his definition of “industrialist” than that. There was, in fact, something that was to have a major effect on life in this country — and elsewhere, for that matter.

Both my parents were born in California, which in 1920, when I was born, was rather unusual. By now it isn't unusual at all. My maternal and paternal grandparents had all come across the plains. My paternal grandfather came when he was 8 years old, in 1856. His father had already come once to California and then gone back, I believe to Iowa, to purchase cattle, which he then drove across the plains, deserts, and mountains, with my grandfather in tow. My great-grandfather didn't come for gold, but settled in northern California to farm. Actually, my paternal grandfather, for a brief time, was sheriff of Butte

County in northern California. There's a story about him which is possibly apocryphal. He became a dentist and died in 1898, at age 50. (I found out rather late in my life, thanks to a lengthy obituary in, as I recall, The Pacific Prohibitionist, that he was well known as a vigorous and generous prohibitionist. As the years go by it seems that I have come to resemble him physically much more than my father, but his viewpoint on liquid refreshment has never been part of my makeup — nor was it of my father's.) The story about my paternal grandfather was that he had gone to Virginia City in Nevada, where the Comstock Lode was still pouring forth its riches when he was a young man (until 1886 it produced half of all the silver mined in the United States). There, reportedly, he practiced dentistry in order to earn enough money to go the University of California's Dental School in Berkeley. Whether this is apocryphal or not, I can't say.

As for the historical aspect of my father's interests, in 1925 a man whom he knew slightly came to see him at the Crocker Bank, seeking financial backing for a young man named Philo T. Farnsworth, an electrical engineer from Utah who had some ideas about television. After much discussion, examination, and consultations, my father, James Fagan, and some associates started to back him — as a personal, not a Crocker Bank, matter. The backers provided Farnsworth with space for a laboratory on Green Street just below the Bay side of Telegraph Hill in San Francisco — plus $1,500 a month, of which $200 was for Farnsworth. (A plaque commemorating the building's historical role has been stolen so often that the City of San Francisco finally embedded a large bronze version in a massive granite boulder in the street.) In 1928, at the laboratory, I first saw television. It was a very foggy day. A camera on the roof was pointed at the Russ Building, then a prominent local skyscraper, invisible in the fog. On the screen two floors below in the lab, however, we could see everything very clearly.

My father and his associates began a long series of technical, legal, and financial negotiations and arrangements. Among the technical was one with Zworykin at RCA, one of the other great scientists working on television — it being recognized that, because of its primacy in broadcasting at the time, RCA would ultimately be essential. Then there

was a technical collaboration with Philco in Philadelphia. In 1938 or 1939 the backers and Farnsworth bought the Capehart Company at Fort Wayne in Indiana (at the time maker of the premier U. S.-made record-playing machines) from U. S. Senator Capehart. This became the Farnsworth Radio and Television Company. As the war clouds gathered, the Federal Government, which had given its go ahead to television production, issued instructions to the potential television manufacturers to drop television and fulfill the large defense orders coming from Washington., Farnsworth immediately switched to war production, I believe mostly radar.

After the war there were hearings before the Federal Government as to which television system would be chosen for the United States (as similar choices were made by foreign governments then and later — hence the lack of uniformity in television transmission throughout the world). Farnsworth was one of the three systems competing. The Federal choice did not go to Farnsworth and that, in effect, was the end of the Company. My father got everybody out of it — himself last. But to my astonishment, about 1992 — an item in The Washington Post caught my eye. As you no doubt know, each State is allowed two statues of outstanding citizens in the Capitol, whether in the Rotunda, or Statuary Hall, or both, I don't know. Utah, after all these years, still had only Brigham Young immortalized in the Federal Capitol. Utah was entitled to another statue of a distinguished native son. A referendum had been held in Utah, and, by Jove, today there is a statue of Philo T. Farnsworth in the Capitol.

Q. Your schooling?

McCARGAR: I attended a public grammar school — Grant School — in San Francisco, which no longer exists physically (having been erroneously condemned by the City and unnecessarily demolished to the benefit of some real estate developers). But there are an extraordinary number of Foreign Service Officers — if you can ever research it, but perhaps it's not worth it — who were alumni of San Francisco's Grant School.

Q: Grant?

McCARGAR: Grant, Ulysses S. Grant. We were treated to an annual visit and speech from Major General Ulysses S. Grant, III. Of the FSO's who attended the school, I believe Durbrow is one example, Andy Donovan another.

Q: Elbridge Durbrow?

McCARGAR: Yes. There are others that I can't recall offhand. But the reason is that Grant was the school where the children of Army officers stationed at the Presidio were sent to school. I attended a public high school — Galileo, then the largest high school in the U. S., located in North Beach, the Italian quarter of the City. Diversification of the student body was then, the early thirties, just coming into fashion with the educationists — but we were not bussed; we had to make our own way on the cable cars and streetcars of the City (until one's 16th birthday, and a test, conferred the glory of a driving license).

San Francisco was a splendid city to grow up in. Very cosmopolitan, as you know. We had the Chinese, we had the Italians , we had the Mexicans, and we had a very great French influence, which most people don't realize. For example, when I was a child in the Twenties, the best hospital in San Francisco was the French Hospital — as the American Hospital became the best, or most fashionable, in Paris. There was good food of all sorts, and a lively sense, not only of the city's own history (brief as it then was) but also of the rest of the world.

After high school I made a clear choice. I had three older sisters who had gone for a time to Wellesley, and then to the University of California at Berkeley (I suspect in deference to my father, who had wanted to attend there, but had been prevented by his father's early death). Possibly in revolt against all that, I stated that I wished to go to Stanford. So to Stanford I went.

Q: You went to Stanford from when to when?

McCARGAR: I entered autumn 1937 — the class of 1941.

Q: That was a great year to get out of college, wasn't it?

McCARGAR: 1941 was, one might say, full of promise — promise of all kinds.

Q: What were you majoring in?

McCARGAR: For along time I didn't really know what I was doing. I was in a certain state of adolescent misery. But one of my classmates with whom I was very close, Walter Stoessel, was more disciplined. He was aiming, with clarity and determination, at the Foreign Service. Faculty advisors kept saying to me, “Look, you've got to aim. It doesn't matter what it is, you can change that later. Aim at something.” I said, “Fine, I'll aim for the Foreign Service”. So I majored in political science. I had minors in history and economics. I did a nice B plus average or so — even though I flunked one course in accounting because my father had forced me to take it.

Q: So much for parental influence.

McCARGAR: Actually his ambition for me was to take engineering and then go on to law school. Well, I'm not certain I would ever have made it through that world. But his advice was, of course, very sound for the times. I'd be financially much more comfortable today than I am if I'd done that. But I continued with my Foreign Service studies. I was helped at Stanford by a professor named Graham Stuart.

Q: Oh, yes, he wrote the book on the American Foreign Service.

McCARGAR: He was very influential, and the Department of State viewed him very favorably. A recommendation from him was usually helpful in your dossier. I must tell you that a number of years later, when I was in the Paris Embassy, Professor Stuart — this

was in 1951-52 — came into town to revise his book. He and I had lunch. I have never seen a professor more miserable in my life. He said, “You know, I put the Paris Embassy in my book as the ideal Foreign Service post. Everything under one roof. There it was, right on the corner of the Avenue Gabriel and the Place de la Concorde.” (He had written the book in the mid-thirties.) He went on, despondent, “Now I come here, the Embassy consists of some 18 or 19 buildings around town — and there are 2000 employees!”.

In due course, after a brief period on the San Francisco Call-Bulletin (I only discovered years later that at that same time David Newsom was doing a stint at The San Francisco Chronicle before heading off to war in the Pacific), I came east for a summer of preparation for the Foreign Service written exams at Colonel Turner's cram school. Classmates were a roster of the future Foreign Service: Ambassadors, a Deputy Secretary of State, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries — Stoessel, Marshall Green, Findley Burns, Fisher Howe, and on. I don't know if you know of the good Colonel's school.

Q: I've heard mention of it.

McCARGAR: There were two such schools at the time. One was Rowdybush's in Georgetown, the other Colonel Turner's in Alexandria. Colonel Turner's, where we went, had among his faculty Ted Acheson, the Dean's younger brother, who would intersperse, at almost every spoken paragraph, “When my brother was running the Treasury...” There were some very highly qualified people on the faculty. It was a good course. In September 1941 we had to take the written examination. At that time, as you know, it was four days of just sitting and writing 8 hours a day. I passed. Actually the notice of passing arrived just about the time of Pearl Harbor. I was finishing up some work at Stanford, and suddenly there we were, caught in a new and menacing world.

There were five Stanford people who passed the examination that year. First time in history any university exceeded Harvard. A thousand people had taken the written exams in 1941 and 100 passed. Of those 100 the oral examiners passed 30, because the allowed

strength of the Service was 750 at that point — but in January 1942 there were only 720 FSO's serving, so they needed exactly 30. Thirty of us were swept in.

It's only fair to bring in Dean Acheson at this point. On the 6th of January 1942 I took my oral examination. I had a temperature of 102 degrees. I'd come down with a good California ailment called amoebic dysentery (only diagnosed later). The Board of the Foreign Service at that time consisted of the four Assistant Secretaries of State, somebody from Commerce, somebody from Agriculture, maybe Joe Greene, who used to prepare the written exam, was there — I can't remember — and an exceedingly nice man named Robert MacAtee, who was Secretary of the Board. I was sitting out in the waiting room, where I heard laughter from inside, which made me — a Westerner — feel a little awkward. Bob Brandin, with whom I later served in Paris, had gone in before me.

Q: He was my Deputy Chief of Mission in Athens.

McCARGAR: Bob was? He's up in New Hampshire now.

Q: Yes, I know.

McCARGAR: It seems that, after graduating, he'd spent a year working at Bambergers's department store in New Jersey. So the Board asked him what he had done professionally. He answered that he'd spent a year working “at Bamberg#r's.” That brought down the Foreign Service Board. (When I was told this later, I realized it was an Eastern joke.)

While waiting, I saw the day's New York Times on a nearby table. I hadn't been able to read anything that morning, I was in bad shape with my fever, so to distract myself I took up the Times. A prominent item on the first page reported the decision by Judge Landis in the second Harry Bridges trial.

Q: This was about longshoremen?

McCARGAR: Bridges was head of the longshoremen's union in San Francisco. The trial was about his being a being a communist. As it happened, when I had worked on the Call-Bulletin in San Francisco, I'd covered that trial. (Also my father, who was very conservative in these matters — I remember him saying “If they elect Upton Sinclair Governor of California, we're moving to Nevada” — was in the group of shipping people who were after Bridges.) In other words, I knew a good deal about that particular case. So after I had been summoned before the Board someone said, “Mr. McCargar, you're from San Francisco, do you know anything about the Bridges case?” So I recounted it from beginning to end, including that morning's newspaper account of the decision. The question, of course, really was, “Did you read the paper today?”

Howland Shaw, Assistant Secretary of State for Administration (the Foreign Service was his pet toy) was a psychology enthusiast. I'd been told — I can't remember by whom, perhaps Graham Stuart — that he would ask about IQ tests. I knew what the right answers, according to the orthodoxy of the day, were, and I gave them. So far so good.

Then Dean Acheson said, “Now, Mr. McCargar, you've studied Russian. You've studied Russian history. You apparently know a great deal about Russia. What is your estimation of the post-war policy of the Soviet Union? Collective security or territorial aggrandizement?” Well, I may have been young but I wasn't that stupid. So I walked all around that question. After some of my meandering, Acheson raised his fist and slammed it down on the table in front of him. No Board laughter here. Acheson said, “Stop evading the question! Answer it.” So, stifling a gulp of panic, I said “Territorial aggrandizement.”

Exam's over, MacAtee comes out and says “You passed,” and (presumably because I spoke Russian) took me up to Loy Henderson, at that time Director of East European Affairs, and — apart from Ray Murphy — the Department's chief expert on the Soviet Union. The first thing I said to Mr. Henderson was, “I don't know whether I've made a terrible mistake, but this is what I said to Assistant Secretary Acheson in response to his

direct question." Henderson looked up at me from his desk, and said "You didn't make a mistake."

Q: So Loy Henderson had no illusions about the Soviet Union.

McCARGAR: None. And one result was my assignment to the Soviet Union.

Q: Before we get to that, what was happening? Obviously, you were a young man just out of college. We entered World War II in December of '41, so we're into early '42. What was the status of somebody going into the Foreign Service as opposed to regular military service?

McCARGAR: First of all: the minute you passed your oral exam in January of '42, you were not taken into the Foreign Service; because there was a Congressional procedure that had to be followed. Instead, you were immediately employed by the Department of State. For example, I was put into the World Intelligence Division, located physically in the Commerce Department. Everyone was given some kind of temporary posting in the Department until their Foreign Service commissions came through. In the meanwhile, they were exempt from the draft. The minute they became Foreign Service officers, they were, as such, further exempt from the draft. That changed later — but we'll get to that.

Q: Before you went out, did you get any training?

McCARGAR: No.

Q: Did anybody say this is a visa, this is a passport, this is an aide-memoir?

McCARGAR: No, there was no time for that. Of course, they didn't have the facilities. The war had just broken out, everybody was in an uproar. The posts everywhere were asking for staff; in my own case, the Soviet posts, Moscow, Kuibyshev, and Vladivostok, all needed more Russian-speakers.

Q: What was the genesis of this learning Russian?

McCARGAR: I had two reading periods in my youth: one when I was about 8 or 9, 8 to 10 I'd say, another about 12 to 14. I read so avidly my father used to buy books for me by the pound. Big sacks and dump them. I'd go through them like a flash. History was my main interest. In those days, as a young kid, I could recite the names of all the Kings of France, of England, the Holy Roman Emperors, the Tsars of Russia. I knew it all by memory. By the time I was ten, I think, I had read Rambeaud's 4-volume history of Russia, which at that time was the best thing going. In addition, in San Francisco during the twenties and the thirties, we had a number of refugees from the Revolution who'd come through Siberia, Japan, and China. For example, my riding instructor was a Cossack cavalry officer, and my gym instructor a Polish officer loyal to the Tsar. My summer camp counselors were mostly former Imperial officers. These were very impressive men to a youngster already caught up by history. Plus we had in San Francisco at that time — I wouldn't call them call caf#s in the European sense; they were really bars , coffee bars — where the Russian #migr#s congregated, and argued about who was going to be Minister of Defense when the Tsar was restored — indeed, who was properly entitled to be Tsar. All together, this was an atmosphere which fed my imagination — and view of the world.

I had taken Latin through high school, and I took one more year at the University. Five years of Latin was enough for me, helpful as it was. At that time there were only four universities in the country with Slavic language departments, and Stanford was one of them (with a faculty of two, Genrikh Lanz, who headed the Department, and his assistant, Professor Kyril Brynner, of whom more later). So for three years, I took Russian. In the Slavic Department there were, each of those three years, just two students. The other student changed so I was the only constant for those years. A year after I left, while I was in Russia, that class had 75 students. Another change of the period: the Russians had become our great allies.

Q: So you were the equivalent of an individual replacement being sent right off to a post. How did you go , where did you go, and how did this work?

McCARGAR: The Government chartered a Pan Am Clipper: the four-engine flying boat that was then the transoceanic air transport. The only way that you could get to Russia was through the Middle East and Iran at that point, unless you went on the supply run around the northern tip of Europe into Murmansk, which was deemed too dangerous for everybody — and shortly was definitively proved to be just that.

So we took off from New York in the chartered Clipper. It was a very interesting bunch of people on board. Louis Fischer, friend of Chicherin, the great Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs during the Twenties, and author of an outstanding history of the Bolshevik Revolution (which I had read at Stanford, and which had made Fischer persona non grata to Stalin) was on his way to India to interview Gandhi (Fischer became a great devotee). Maurice Hindus, whose books on collectivization in the Ukraine and southern Russia (Red Bread, Humanity Uprooted) was on board. There were a number of military headed to India and China, among them pilots on their way to Kunming and the “Flying Tigers.” An Army captain who was in fact in OSS — then called the COI, Coordinator of Information — who became a lifelong friend. This was very exciting, and instructive, for a young man just starting out.

We refueled in Miami and then Trinidad. As we crossed the mouth of the Amazon (and the equator) the captain executed a sudden drop in altitude, to initiate us as new subjects of Neptune (a peacetime ceremony adapted from ship crossings of the equator that quickly disappeared). Following which one engine went out. We waited one week in Belem for a replacement engine. Parker Hart was Consul there, and I quickly unloaded into his safe the diplomatic pouch which was chained to my wrist, in order to enjoy the sparkling social life then animating this metropolis of the Amazon.

After Belem we refueled again at Natal, and crossed the South Atlantic from there to Fisherman's Lake in Liberia — a route that Pan Am had set up under Government contract. The co-pilot on our plane happened to be a Stanford man whom I'd known very well. He told me that when they first laid out the route they flew into Fisherman's Lake and, as they were about to drop this huge flying boat down onto the lake, they saw all the fishermen in dugouts on the lake leap out of their dugouts and run to shore. They quickly pulled back up for another round at putting the ship down in what they hoped was deeper water.

After Liberia our final Pan Am stop was to be Lagos, in Nigeria. But this was April 1942, and no one knew what the position of the French military in the West African colonies might be. From Liberia we flew south, far out to sea, and then turned east, following at a distance the line of the coast. From off the British colony of the Gold Coast, we had a fighter escort from the British base at Takoradi, which accompanied us until we were past the three French colonies preceding Nigeria, which was, of course, British.

Q: There was still doubt. Vichy was in control there, and de Gaulle was beginning to make some moves, but that was all?

McCARGAR: De Gaulle was in London, and he hadn't yet made a move into Africa. He had occupied St. Pierre and Miquelon off Newfoundland the previous December, but he had not yet made his unsuccessful attack on Dakar, in Senegal.

Lagos was jammed with refugees from the Far East. Quarters were scarce. Luckily I could bed down at the American Consulate, before taking off the next morning in an American DC3, C-47 in the military terminology. But it took 3 days to cross Africa. There were not yet any navigational aids between southern Nigeria and the Sudan, so the American military didn't yet fly at night. Where we landed in late afternoon was where we spent the night. Kano, in the grasslands of northern Nigeria was the first stop, then a night at Maiduguri, near French territory. Next we overflew Chad, avoiding the French base at Fort Lamy, then

a stop at El-Fasher, already in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, but still the Sahara, and then a night in Khartoum.

Q: God, what a part of the world!

McCARGAR: Khartoum looked like the summum of civilization, after the land we had crossed to get there. I found the southern Sahara terrifying. It's alternately black, red, black-red, and so on. It looks like hell — Dante's version. I guess it really is if you're on that ground and you don't know how to make your way out.

From Khartoum we made a refueling stop at Wadi Halfa, on the Egyptian border, and from there we finally got to Cairo. There I spent a week waiting for a plane to get me on to Baghdad.

I finally took off from Cairo in a British Sunderland flying boat. We landed on the Dead Sea in Palestine, which is, as you know, well below sea level. Geologically, historically fascinating, but as a flight it's hair-raising, unless you're well forewarned, which I was not. The plane takes off from the Nile in Cairo and after flying a bit just above the water, it turns to the east. After some desert, still flying at a very low level, suddenly you see on either side of the plane cliffs rise up. You're in between them. The plane is actually descending a ravine into the Dead Sea. The wing tips looking to be but a few feet from each cliff. Absolutely terrifying. But I was most sorry for a Dutch Admiral who was on this airplane going out to Indonesia. Tiny little chap; he was airsick the whole way. God, that man was in misery. I thought, “You're going out to your death and you already feel like death on this damn airplane”. I don't know whether he survived once he got to Indonesia. The Dutch Far East Fleet, you know, was destroyed.

Q: They all went down. I somehow have the feeling he died.

McCARGAR: I think, yes.

Q: There was a short Dutch Admiral who died early in the Pacific War. Was he Doorman or Helfinch?, either one? When you say short, I think it must have been Doorman.

McCARGAR: I think it was Doorman.

Q: You're going when? What are we talking about - February or March?

McCARGAR: I left New York in April and we're now well into May.

Q: When you were in Cairo, were people talking about Rommel pounding at the gates? Some of his great offenses were mounted about then.

McCARGAR: When I was in Cairo, I went over to Shepherd's Hotel, which was the place to go. And they had just received Rommel's famous telegram reserving a suite. They said he'd be there shortly. Needless to say, this was the talk of the town. Also needless to say, if you've just supposedly recovered from amoebic dysentery, you don't go through Cairo without doing some penance — “gyppy tummy” they called it there. I was sharing a room at the Carlton Hotel with two officers, South Africans who had just come in on rest and recreation from the Western Desert. They didn't want to talk about it very much, but what they did say was, “This can't go on, the slaughter is too great, its too horrible, and somebody's got to win this Goddamn thing out there one way or another.” Of course, Montgomery finally managed it.

Egypt at the time was not exactly welcoming. I was carrying a courier bag, though not a courier letter, since no one thought that nicety necessary at the time. I was traveling with a diplomatic passport, though. The bag was locked to my wrist as I went through Egyptian Customs. The Customs officer, whose general air was that he was not certain he would allow me into Egypt, asked me, “How much money do you have?” I said “That's none of your business.” We had a little argument back and forth. I've forgotten what is was that

produced his final remark, but he concluded the discussion with the haughty statement, “This is Egypt. We're neutral in this war.”

At the Embassy (though I think it was still a Legation) Wally Barbour (later to be our Ambassador to Israel for eleven years), whom I was to see a number of times over future years on East European problems, was the man with whom I dealt. He took the pouch, quite devoid of any of the sense of awe it had originally bestowed on me. It turned out to contain a coding device for the mission in Saudi Arabia. It was a big, heavy, canvas and leather bag; the device inside was no more than a foot long and ten inches wide. Both Wally and I accepted the assumption that it was very urgent.

But to return to the Dead Sea. I found it difficult to realize where I was. After the British military had completed their errands, they managed to lift the plane off the Dead Sea, and we flew on to Habbaniyah.

Q: Which is a major British base near Baghdad.

McCARGAR: Exactly. That is, it was then. Habbaniyah, of course, is a lake. I was deposited on the dock, and the plane went on to the Persian Gulf, India, and as much of the East as was still in friendly hands.

Two Indian Army soldiers offered me a ride into Baghdad from Habbaniyah. It was a long ride. I was, of course, familiar with the recent events in Iraq the British occupation to block both pan-Arab and pro-German elements and insure Allied control of Mesopotamia. But completely naive in the more worldly sense, I took the frequent smiles and strange language of my armed escorts as standard procedure. My escorts knew better. They dropped me finally at the American Legation — at which point with hue and cry they demanded to be paid (in dollars). I was baffled as to what to do. At my most indecisive Fraser Wilkins came out and shooed the Indian Army off. I spent just one night at the

Legation. The next day I got on a British land plane which flew up to Tehran, where I had to spend quite a bit of time, about 3 weeks.

Q: What was the situation in Tehran as you saw it?

McCARGAR: In Tehran (also still a Legation) Louis Dreyfus was the Minister. He was a kind host, and I went several times to the Residence for meals. You probably know that Residence. I was stunned by it. One cause was the cool stream running through the dining room. Yet another cause for astonishment was my sudden understanding of the poem, “In a Persian Garden.” The American Residence was the only one of the great compounds I entered. But it was enough to explain all “Persian gardens.” On the way to Tehran you fly over what looks to be burnt land. In the city itself, the same burnt land is all around you. Stark mountains overlooking dry and dusty streets, buildings of the same dusty color. But then you go behind the walls of the great compounds, and enter into a different land, one of beautiful, towering, almost wild greenery. The American Residence thus lay in what looked to the newcomer like a vast park. As I say, the dining room in the American Residence had a little river through it, gurgle, gurgle, cooling you off, absolutely delightful. A great change from the Ferdowsi Hotel, where I stayed. All honor to the great Persian poet — but not much of a hotel.

The city itself was full of Poles, practically everywhere you went all were Poles. Through an agreement between the Polish Government-in-Exile in London and the Soviets the Polish Army, General Anders commanding, was being formed in Tashkent from Poles scattered all over the Soviet Union after the Nazi-Soviet partition of Poland. Poles who could make their way to Tashkent (and they numbered in the thousands — except, of course, the thousands murdered at Katyn) assembled there. The survivors and new recruits would then be sent over the mountains to Tehran. From there units were sent to the west, initially to the Western Desert, where they began the long road that would include Monte Cassino. I frequently ate in one or another of the Polish messes, and became duly fond of fruit soup.

When I left Washington, Loy Henderson had asked me to take care of a Polish diplomat on his way to Kuibyshev, who was on the plane the whole trip with us. He was the most morose — I mean, morose as Poles can get, and I have a high Polish decoration, so I'm high on Poles — but this was the most morose Pole I ever encountered. Incidentally, after the war he took the wrong turn and went to the Communists. But I took good care of him. The result was that General Anders, who was in town when I got to Tehran —

Q: He was the head of the Polish Army?

McCARGAR: He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army he was forming. The Commander-in-Chief of all Free Polish forces was General Sikorsky, who was also Prime Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London. The next year General Anders was given command of the Polish 2nd Corps in Italy. But in Tehran in 1942 he invited me to fly into Tashkent with him. I already had a passion for Central Asia, which I've never assuaged, and this was one of those things in life I really wanted to do. I told the General I was most grateful, and I would check with my authorities. I told the American Legation of what I believed to be an extraordinary opportunity. (No Westerner had been in Central Asia since the indomitable Fitzroy Maclean, of the British Embassy, sneaked in there a few years before.) The next thing I knew was a summons from Minister Dreyfus to the Residence. He read me a terrible riot act; “How do you dare?” and all that sort of thing. I only had one other Foreign Service Officer speak to me that way — Elbridge Durbrow in one of his rages, also about an airplane flight. Dreyfus said Admiral Standley, our Ambassador in Kuibyshev had —

Q: That's where our Embassy had moved because of the German offensive, after they had evacuated Moscow?

McCARGAR: Yes, after a brief period in Kazan. Ambassador Standley's message via Minister Dreyfus was that he wanted me to come by a route that had been planned (though I had not been let in on the plan), and to bring several sacks of mail waiting in

Tehran — and fresh vegetables. So I didn't go to Tashkent. My thanks and regrets to General Anders were genuine.

So, instead of soaring over Khorasan and down into the valleys and plains of the Oxus and Jaxartes, I joined Maurice Hindus, and Alden Haupt, another FSO, with mail and sacks of vegetables, on a Russian airplane to chuff over the Elburz Mountains and down into Azerbaijan. I'd never before or since seen an airplane like that; it had what looked to be corrugated tin sides.

Q: Sort of like the Junkers, the Ford trimotor, or the German standard transport plane?

McCARGAR: Yes. Plus bicycle wheels and a wooden propeller. None of the side panels fit so you got a good bit of fresh air. From Tehran you go up and over the mountains to get down to the Caspian. The plane has to go to about 18 to 19,000 feet. I think the pass is about 16 and a half, 17,000 feet. The pilot and the co-pilot, a woman, (merely noted, nothing against her, but they were rare at that time) had oxygen. The three passengers in the back, the vegetables, and the mail did not have oxygen. So we just conked out. You fell asleep, that was all. When we awoke there we flying over all this green jungle in Azerbaijan, on our way into Baku. So I can't tell you what lies between Tehran and Baku. I have no idea.

We then had to wait in Baku for about five days while the Russians tried to get us some kind of rail transportation. They finally put us on a train headed for Rostov on the Don. In the middle of the night, when we're half way to Rostov, the Germans captured Rostov. I can't remember if it was the first or second time. The train crew got the word and we screeched to a halt. We then backed up about 180 kilometers to a junction called Tikhoretskaya. A line went from there to Stalingrad. We got off there, in order, as we were instructed by railroad officials, to switch to river transport. This is now late May, early June, and the battle was still 5 months off. Soviet troops were still coming into the city from the south and west.

Q: This was the southern push of the German 1942 offensive?

McCARGAR: It was the early part of it. By late autumn of that year the Germans were on a line that ran from east of Orel (the Soviets had managed to hold onto their traditional artillery manufacturing center of Tula) through Voronezh to Stalingrad, and then south almost to Grozny (now so much in other news). They were on the northern slopes of the Caucasus, and this was when one German patrol climbed Mt. Elbrus and planted the Nazi flag there. The whole area through which we had passed after our train left, say, the region of Grozny was in German hands. That push would of course culminate in the Battle of Stalingrad. And it was already on the horizon. On our way to Stalingrad we had to get off the train twice while German aircraft bombed. You just got off the train, lay in a ditch, and when the whistle was blown, got up, boarded the train, and went on.

I took advantage of our one-day stay in Stalingrad to follow the Russian fashion and get myself shaved (not even Russian soldiers shave themselves). It was undeniably one of the worst things that ever happened to me. The young girl engaged in this butchery had a straight razor — in which even from a distance you could see the nicks in the blade. She'd go down one side, leaning in to follow the line of the cheek, leaving bloody streaks down my cheek with each nick. Anyway, I survived that. Then we got on a ship to go up the Volga to Kuibyshev. You'd be surprised at the name of the ship. It was the “J. V. Stalin.” It's capacity was 600 passengers, and we were 3000, mostly Red Army soldiers from the front, on that ship.

We three, with our vegetables and mail, were the only foreigners, and we were given staterooms. But before we could reach our staterooms at night, the officers would order the Red Army soldiers into the passageways in the interior of the ship. They'd have them lie down. Then they'd order a second group to come in and lie down on the top of the first group. And then a third layer would come in and lie down on the top of the second one. Then we were told to walk on them to get to our staterooms. This went on for three nights.

Q: What was your impression looking back on it? A fantastic view of the Soviet Union at the time of its greatest challenge. You were the new boy there, wide-eyed I assume, looking at this thing.

McCARGAR: Well, I was, of course, fascinated by all this. I had a lot of conversations with the Russian soldiers. They were impressive: young, courageous, no trace of discouragement in the face of the continuing German advance. They weren't bothered particularly by the primitive accommodations for them on the ship. I guess they'd rather be stepped and slept on than be at the front at that moment, anyway. I also remember coming through the Kuban, on the train that took us to Stalingrad. Maurice Hindus had not been in the Soviet Union for, I think, ten years — not since the success of his earlier books on collectivization: Humanity Uprooted, Red Bread, and the famine in the Ukraine and the south of Russia that Stalin had instigated.

Q: The elimination of the kulaks?

McCARGAR: Yes. Hindus would look out the train window as we passed by these villages made up of little huts — looking like adobe — with grass and straw roofs and a big grass street between them. (In the Kuban they were mostly Cossack villages, the Cossacks not having been among the most preferred citizens during the events of the 1930's.) Hindus kept saying, “This is marvelous. This is the greatest thing I've ever seen. The improvements that they've done here! What a marvel!” Hindus would go on like this at each village. And there I was, looking at what seemed to me great poverty. A very simple kind of life. I didn't know what Hindus was talking about because I hadn't been there in the earlier times. When we got to Kuibyshev, which is a miserable town -

Q: Kuibyshev was south and east of Moscow?

McCARGAR: It's well south. It's below where the Volga, a little bit after Kazan, starts to turn south. It's sort of half way between Gorki (now again Nizhni Novgorod) and Stalingrad

(Volgograd) on the Volga. But it's still a long way from Astrakhan and the Caspian. It was called Tsaritsyn before. I think they've given it a new name; either given it a new name or gone back to the old one. It was a miserable town. They'd moved the whole Diplomatic Corps there. The facilities were very primitive. There was a kind of opera house, or central theater, with some kind of entertainment. All the foreigners gathered there, but the trouble was you'd have to go in the dark and come home in the dark. And you could damn well break your leg and your head, because they had potholes in that city that were even greater than anything I've seen in Washington, DC.

Q: Well, let me tell you. I was in Kyrgyzstan about a year-and-a-half ago and there were 10 foot holes in the sidewalks. I just didn't go out at night because those were on the sidewalk. You'd drop into the sewer. They couldn't afford to have the street lights on - so its scary.

McCARGAR: Well that's what Kuibyshev was like. I spent a couple of weeks there.

Q: Technically, this was our Embassy there, wasn't it?

McCARGAR: Yes, it was our Embassy.

Q: Who was the Ambassador? What were they doing in this out-of-the-way place?

McCARGAR: Our Ambassador was William Standley, a four-star Admiral. He'd been Chief of Naval Operations and was a great pal of FDR. In fact, Standley had brought along as his Naval Attach#, a man named Jack Duncan, who in due course made Admiral. I think Duncan was later made Ambassador to Peru. But he was in Moscow when I was in Kuibyshev. When I came to know Duncan in Moscow he took pleasure in saying the only reason he was there was that when Admiral Standley was CNO he, Duncan, was in charge of seeing that when the President was on a Navy ship (something he enjoyed very much) the appropriate supplies of gin and vermouth, and whatever else was needed, were aboard ship — contrary to Naval Regulations.

I was taken to see Admiral Standley. A canny old gentleman, pleasant of manner. When the moment presented itself, I made my respectful protest that he would not let me go to Central Asia. He said “Look, I'm a Navy man, and for us the most important thing in the world is the mail. We haven't been getting our mail here the way we should, and I wanted to try out this new route. That's why I wanted you to come this way through Baku.” I said “Yes, sir, yes, sir, yes, sir.” Actually, Standley was a very nice gentleman, even if he didn't care about getting some information on Central Asia. You may recall that, later the next year, he came out with this blast that the Russians were making no recognition of the help they were being given them by the United States. In other words, he was also the feisty type.

The chief person I can remember who was helping him at that moment was Eddie Page, the senior man on the staff there. Eddie was a Russian expert. In fact, earlier that same year he had given me my oral Russian-language exam in Washington. He later served Averell Harriman very effectively as a senior aide. I had occasion to come across him six years later when he was in the Rome Embassy, and then again in the mid-fifties, when he was Consul General in Munich. His final FS post was as Ambassador to Bulgaria.

In Kuibyshev I had one strange encounter. While walking in the street, somebody nudged me and pointed out two chaps walking on the other side of the street. My companion said, “That's the Bulgarian Embassy.” You may recall that the Bulgarians remained at peace with the Russians throughout the entire Second World War, until, near the very end, the Russians invaded them. The two Bulgarian diplomats spoke to no one, and no one spoke to them, but they kept up the pretense of relations with Mother Russia. We were not allowed to see any Soviet citizens. Kuibyshev didn't have the facilities for such encounters that Moscow had.

But I did see one person there who always impressed me. He came around to the Embassy, usually in the evenings, when either food or drink, or both, were available. He was a rather famous figure in history. His name was George Andreichin. He was a

Bulgarian who had been very prominent in the Comintern. How he had survived until 1942, I don't know. He came in and talked very freely with a lot of us in the Embassy. We assumed he went back and reported whatever he picked up. Eventually Stalin had him executed, in 1947. A very interesting man. He knew a lot of history, and he was not averse to telling it. I was fascinated with all of this.

We had just gotten news of the Soviet custody of the crew of the American aircraft that had landed in the Soviet Primorsk Krai (Maritime Province) after General Doolittle's famous raid on Tokyo in April 1942. All I knew, and was told, was that the crew was being held in a town called Penza, which is about half way between Kuibyshev and Moscow. So I was put on a train — I confess I was poured onto a train in good Russian style — and went to Moscow. It took 48 hours. I looked out at Penza, but that really didn't help anything.

I was very excited about getting to Moscow which, even in that grim wartime, had a certain magnificence to it, a great weight of history. At the beginning I stayed at Spaso House, the Ambassador's Residence. The Embassy in Moscow at that moment consisted of Tommy Thompson, myself, and two clerks, Newt Waddell and another whose name I've forgotten. All four of us lived at Spaso House, as did Captain, later Admiral, Jack Duncan and two Assistant Naval Attach#s. The U. S. Military Mission was located right across from the Kremlin in the Mokhovaya building, a part of Moscow University which the U. S. Government rented from the Soviets as our combined Chancellery and staff residence. A very old friend from Stanford, by then a Major in the Army, was on the staff of the Military Mission.

Brigadier-General Philip Faymonville headed the Military Mission. Faymonville was a very controversial character. He was a San Franciscan, and reputed to be held in high regard by the White House — more narrowly attributed by rumor to mean either Harry Hopkins or Mrs. Roosevelt. As importantly, he was a very close friend of Lavrenti Beria. Not the kind of person you want to be close friends with.

Q: Beria was the head of the KGB, I mean the NKVD?

McCARGAR: NKVD. He was People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (in succession to the murderous Yagoda and Yezhov).

Q: He was the hatchet man.

McCARGAR: Yes, and how! Faymonville was extremely pro-Russian. He wouldn't listen to a word against the Soviet Union, or anything that went on there. This caused a lot of tension.

Q: You talk about the tensions within the American representation in the Soviet Union. I mean, we were having real problems with the Soviets at that time, weren't we? With our allies?

McCARGAR: Well, there was dissatisfaction on Stalin's part. And this constant pressure for the Second Front. The delays until 1944 in the invasion of Western Europe, the 1942 North African and 1943 Italian campaigns were regarded by many high-ranking Russians, both military and political, as diversions, if not actually evidence of an underlying ill will towards the Soviet Union.

However, FDR and those who were running affairs were giving the Russians every possible aid they could summon. Sometimes even at the cost of other theaters of war. For example, they had built this whole transport and infrastructure system across Iran so that cargoes unloaded at Abadan could go to the southern Soviet border stations. Planes unloaded from ships at the Persian Gulf could be flown off direct to the Russian front by Soviet pilots. From now on the Russians could take the stuff and make use of it.

Actually, while I was in Moscow, it was the time of the great disaster on the Murmansk run. I've forgotten what the exact figures were, but out of a 32-ship convoy from the British Isles, at least 22 went down. It was terrible. From their bases in Arctic Norway the

Germans attacked the convoys with airplanes and subs, also with surface vessels. That had a very great effect on us in Moscow. I must say, partly because we all had personal effects (and food and liquor) on those ships. At that time we were in fact living out of the Kremlin Commissary, and so ate perfectly well. We still had the Chinese servants in Spaso House, and we all, including the Naval Attach#s, ate there, except for the Military Mission, who rather remained off to one side. But, even if we did not talk too much about it, none of us underestimated the menace of the German closure of the Northern Route to the Soviet Union.

Q: What was Thompson doing and what were you doing there?

McCARGAR: Thompson was — well, you had to have somebody in Moscow. Stalin was in Moscow — after he reappeared following his famous three-day disappearance act when Germany attacked. Tommy was maintaining relations with the Kremlin and those of the leadership — Molotov, for example — who were there. We had visitors coming through all the time who had to be taken to the Kremlin. There were messages that bypassed Kuibyshev, or were repeated from there, for destinations in Moscow. There were allies in Moscow — the British Naval Mission, headed by a very congenial Admiral, and some of their diplomatic staff — John Russell, among others. And every once in a while Sir Stafford Cripps would drop in. There were others: the Swedes had refused to go to Kuibyshev. All these were part of Tommy's duties.

We made one of the bedrooms at Spaso into a code room, and I slept there. Once we got a message from Laurence Steinhardt in Ankara, where he had been transferred as Ambassador after leaving the Moscow Embassy. It took us half-a-day to decode this missive. It contained an entire list of Steinhardt's belongings which he wanted sent from Moscow to Ankara in wartime. It included, and this is not a joke because I saw it with my own eyes, “a box with string too short to use but too long to throw away.” We found that box. To his eternal credit, Newt Waddell was later detached from the Moscow Embassy, and sent down the Volga to Astrakhan with all of Steinhardt's belongings. From there I

think he went by ship to Baku, and from there the Russians got him over to Leninakan on the Turkish border. From there Newt and the Steinhardts' boxes and boxes of belongings were trucked to Ankara — in wartime! This sort of thing made you a little bit nervous.

Q: Was Thompson going in to see Stalin, even though he was pretty low ranking?

McCARGAR: No, he wasn't. He was working through Stalin's Kremlin offices. I don't think he ever went to see him. When Stalin would give a dinner for some visiting American dignitaries, Tommy went. I was too junior to go but Tommy went. Tommy, by that time, was already extremely capable. And he was very astute in avoiding any impression on Ambassador Standley's part that he was usurping his position in any way.

There wasn't a lot of connection with the local citizenry. Of course, there were the correspondents. Practically all of them I got to know quite well, both British and American. There was the sad case of Negley Farson. When I was at Stanford I had read a book by Farson called Way of A Transgressor, which greatly impressed me. It was about his urban life, and then his escape for some years to the wilds of Vancouver Island. Obviously, I was eager to meet him, but his colleagues in the news corps advised against it. Apparently he was in great pain from an incurable leg injury, did not want to see anyone, and drank heavily.

When the Germans essayed an air raid on Moscow, I would usually go to Harold King of Reuters' room at the Metropole Hotel, where the correspondents were billeted. Harold, of whom I would later on see a great deal in Paris, had a room with a balcony. The view over the city was splendid, and we would watch the barrage balloons would go up, and listen to the guns. But I never saw any real damage in the heart of Moscow.

At some point, I moved out of Spaso House and into the Mokhovaya building. Years ago, the building went back to the University of Moscow to which it belonged in the first place. It gave a great view of the Kremlin. It was reasonably comfortable. We were all subject to the wiles of the NKVD's “swallows,” as the Russians themselves called these young

girls who would call you on the phone, the minute — it didn't matter where you lived — the minute you moved into one apartment or another. Some girl would be on the phone and she'd want to meet you at the well-known “National corner” — the corner of Gorki and Mokhovaya Streets, where stood the National Hotel, just down from the main Post Office.

The Russians, being very hierarchical, arranged things in orderly fashion. Top ranks — but top ranks only — had access to a ballerina. I was honored with a circus acrobat. These young ladies were very forthright. They'd say “Look, tomorrow I have to go to the NKVD. I've got tell them what you've been doing. What do I tell them?” (I don't mean to be flip about this aspect of wartime life: some Americans were fortunate to make the acquaintance of some extraordinary Russian women, of great talent and character, and even more fortunate to be able to marry them and to get them out of the Soviet Union.) Ultimately, of course, all this changed.

Q: Were you under any particular constraints? Of course, it was completely different in the Cold War. We're talking about the hot war in which the Soviets are on our side.

McCARGAR: Moscow was much easier once the Germans had been driven back. It was much easier than other places. I was told then that the greatest place any of the people who had been in the Moscow Embassy had ever been was Kazan. At the evacuation of Moscow they were first sent to Kazan. The NKVD hadn't had time to get down there, and the citizens of Kazan, a great many of them, were absolutely friendly and delightful. It was like living in a normal city. Then the Embassy staff were sent on to Kuibyshev. By this time the NKVD was there, and the Embassies were squeezed back into their diplomatic ghetto. Moscow was easier until the Diplomatic Corps came back. I don't recall meeting any male Russians in the time I was in Moscow. And I was there for over two months.

Q: What were you doing?

McCARGAR: Coding and decoding, coding and decoding, coding and decoding.

Q: All this was on the one-time pad or was it a strip machine?

McCARGAR: We had a strip board, so-called machine. Nothing mechanical about it. I don't know why they didn't use the one-time pad, but we were on the strip machine. We also had the Gray Book, which I understand was available in any bookstore the world around. There was a lot of administrative work and the Gray Book was easy to do. There was an Air Corps General, whose name I've forgotten, who came after I'd gone out to the Far East. I was told later he came in and wanted to make a big hit with the Russians. They took him down to Central Asia to show him something. The American General gave the Soviet Air Force in Moscow a strip board so that they could keep in touch while he was in Central Asia.

Q: Wasn't that nice!

McCARGAR: You often wonder.

Q: Did you have the feeling, either in Moscow or in Kuibyshev, (we're talking about the two periods) that the American Embassy was very much engaged or was it pretty much just military aid at that time?

McCARGAR: Oh, no. The Embassy was very much engaged. I don't remember if it was then or little bit later, but, for example, we got queries from the Department. “Do you think that when the Russians reach their former borders that they will get out of the war at that time?” There were a lot of political questions like this that were going back and forth. People in the Department were thinking ahead and the Embassy was getting a lot of queries of this kind. To that extent, they were very useful. Also, through the other diplomatic missions, and this leak and that, the Embassy could pick up quite a bit.

This is the period, incidentally, when Kremlinology got its start. When people learned to figure out what was going on in Russia from these abstruse signs that you got, bird droppings, so to speak, and one thing and another. I remember years later, Walter

Stoessel, on his first assignment to Moscow, had to cover the cultural world. And he got onto it. At that point I was back in Washington reading some of these materials. I was struck by the extent to which Walter had caught onto this technique. He could tell you about a performance of “Swan Lake” at the Bolshoi and draw from it the correct political conclusions about what was going on inside the Kremlin. To people who don't know the technique, it seems extremely weird, but it's a perfectly valid thing that worked for a while. It went beyond just looking to see who was on Lenin's Tomb on the First of May or November 7.

Q: I'm told your great analysis of papers, local papers in particular — who was mentioned, who wasn't mentioned, how often they were mentioned, on what page and things of this nature, were very useful.

McCARGAR: For example, later, the Vladivostok the paper we had — it was not much of a paper — but we read it faithfully. We had a Russian woman working at the Consulate General, Ida Borisovna Minovich, our only secretary. A bird-like woman, very bright. She came into my office one day with the paper, and said “Did you see this?” There was the announcement by the Kremlin of a great honor, a medal of some kind, given to a man named Ramzin. If you knew Bolshevik history, this was absolutely astounding. Ramzin, a brilliant engineer, was the head of what they called the Promyshlennost' Part, the Industrial Party, which supposedly opposed Stalin and the Bolsheviks in the Thirties. There had been a big show trial of those people. The British got involved in that, not to their benefit. Ramzin then disappeared. It was assumed that he had been executed. He was not. He was put in a laboratory with all the equipment he needed. He worked throughout the whole war producing what the leadership wanted. He did so well that they publicly decorated him. You could pick up strange things like this all along, which were great insights.

In any event, after my Moscow experience, I got on the Trans-Siberian — then a 12-day journey from Moscow to Vladivostok. You had to get on with a lot of supplies. I had diplomatic pouches, mail sacks, and boxes and cartons of food. But everyone in the

Embassy was after me before I left. The Agricultural Attach# took me aside and said, “You've got to tell me how the corn crop is.” I said “I'm a city boy”. I'm afraid I wasn't of much use to him. The military, and just about everyone else whispered to me, “You've got to look for the BAM railroad.” The BAM railroad branches off from the Trans-Siberian and goes north of Lake Baikal, ending up on the Pacific Ocean, or more properly, Tatar Strait, at, I think, Nikolaevsk-on-Amur, which is just opposite Sakhalin Island. In other words, it's a route much less vulnerable to the Chinese and Japanese. Everyone urged me, “You've got to look at Bodaibo and see if there's a switch leading out to the north from there.” Another one that excited everyone was the possibility of a tunnel under the Amur at Khabarovsk. Nobody is going to tell this, but all of us who did this journey leaned out the train window in Bodaibo. Tracks went this way, tracks went that way. How did we know? At Khabarovsk everybody got out and peered into the darkness. What amuses me is, about three years ago, i.e., about 1992, the Russian Government announced the opening of the BAM railroad.

Q: Oh yes. That was a major, and very lengthy, accomplishment.

McCARGAR: Exactly. Here we were fussing about in 1942 and trying to find the damn thing when they had probably advanced only eight kilometers off into the taiga.

Q: I was wondering when you mentioned this. It seems like a time warp because I know this was the great thing of the seventies and eighties.

McCARGAR: But whichever line you cross Russia on, it gives you a very impressive idea of the size of the country. After a week in the same train, you really don't care whether you get there or not.

But there were many interesting things en route besides the BAM railroad. For example, as we got up towards the Urals, towards Sverdlovsk (Yekaterinburg, of ill repute) you would see long lines of freight cars filled with people on sidings. These were the refugees from Leningrad (who were only able to be evacuated in mid-winter, across frozen Lake

Ladoga). Our train stopped about every hour, I don't why, but that's just the way it was. The train stopped, not necessarily in a station. You'd get out, you'd walk up and down, everybody. On these occasions, if you stopped by one of these sidings where people were living in freight cars, they all wanted to know how the war is going, what is going on. News. They wanted news. Everybody exchanged as much information as they had. Nobody had a great deal, but whatever they had. A little later on, we began to get a different group of people in these freight car sidings. These were the evacuees from the Voronezh area — the refugees from the 1942 German southern offensive you spoke of. The Russians evacuated, I think, 2 million people from the Voronezh area, which was heavily industrialized. The equipment of all the factories was sent out to Siberia. When I went through Novosibirsk going east, it was a city, as I recall, of 400-500,000 in 1942. When I came back, a year later, in 1943, there was almost 2 million people living and working in an around Novosibirsk. What was going on was unbelievable.

And, as I mentioned, the sheer size of the country carried its own lesson. I was always very fond of Rachmaninov's music. You know, Rachmaninov, in all the years before the Second World War, would go out once every year to the Polish-Russian border — the most unattractive part of Russia, near the Pripet Marshes. He'd spend a whole day out there lying on the ground, looking across at Russia, and crying. I began to understand this passion of the Russian people for their land. It began to mean something to me. I could see it. Some parts are very beautiful (though I'm not much for the steppes). But Russia has everything that you want in terms of topography and climate. And I began to understand some of the Russians' seemingly ineradicable feelings for their land.

I also came eventually to understand something else. When I left Russia it was with that very cynical conclusion that one arrives at, which is that people get the kind of government that they deserve. It is an arguable point. But in time, over years of work and changes in our century, I came to take another view. These people among whom I had lived for two years, in exceptional circumstances, were so cowed, so terrified by what Stalin and company were doing to them (at that point we didn't quite yet blame it all on Stalin) that

they were paralyzed. The first view denies the existence of evil. The second admits its existence. It was the Bolshevik and Soviet knout — and, of course, its earlier versions — that explained the fact that the Russian people would not and could not stand up for themselves against authority.

You know what was the Russian announcement in those days used by the NKVD when they knocked on the door at night to take people away? It was “Zdyes vlast',” meaning “Here is authority.” It didn't say which authority. It didn't say “Here are the police,” or “Here is the NKVD.” No. “Here is authority.” The people did as they were told. As I say, that produced my initial harsh judgment that I came away with after two years there. But in time, after years, that would change. A generation, or more, of dissidents, of intellectuals, of scientists, Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, countless others, less famed, perhaps, but no less demonstrative of a vigorous individual Russian spirit would produce a more generous, more hopeful basic judgment.

Q: Did you get the feeling, as you looked in Moscow and from the whole trip, that, although tremendous things were being done, there wasn't a very operative system? How did you feel about it? Did things work well?

McCARGAR: Well, they must have worked well somewhere. But they worked with a terribly harsh discipline. For example, the children were working in the factories. Anyone over 12 years of age was working in a factory at that time. Three times late — execution. For a kid, say a 13-14 year old kid, three times late — executed. The discipline in the Red Army — officers had the right to kill the men under their command. (This was traditional, and has been so in the Russian Army for a long time.) There were an enormous number of women serving in the Red Army: the penalty for pregnancy was execution. And so on. The ultimate in terror and discipline. But something was working somewhere. That's for sure.

But let's take Vladivostok. It was then a city of 220,000 people. It could be one of the most beautiful cities on the Pacific Rim. It's typical Pacific Rim: indented bays, forested inlets,

mountains rolling down to the sea. And so on. Absolutely lovely. Steep hills, lovely views, all that. But substantially they had gained nothing since the Americans occupied it after the First World War. The Americans built a hospital, they built this, they built that. I had a woman servant, Shura, who was one of the few older inhabitants left in the city. And she would, very shyly, point out “The Americans built that, the Americans built that.” But after the Americans left, in 1921-22, the Soviets, in the ensuing twenty years, had built four apartment buildings in town, eight stories high. None of them had running water. If you lived on the eighth floor and you wanted water, you came down to the ground, you pumped the pump and you hauled it up. That was it.

Everything in the city was pretty worn out. Vladivostok's great days were from 1900 to 1910. On the other hand, the port worked well. All investment had gone into the port. You'd go along Lenin Street, and you'd see these very sleek cruisers in the Naval port. The Soviets built only Italian style for their Navy, and their ships had lovely lines.

Q: They still do. They're much nicer than, say, the American or the British, which can be more functional. But I've seen shots of the now-rusting Soviet Fleet and they're beautiful ships.

McCARGAR: The influence of the Italian naval architects. You will recall Stalin's insistence at the end the Second World War on receiving a share of the Italian Fleet.

But to return to Vladivostok, we were really prisoners there. We were allowed to go to the restaurant of a single hotel — the Chelyuskin, named after the great Soviet polar explorer, but formerly the Versailles (and now given back its original name by its Japanese owners). The clientele was limited to foreigners, high Party functionaries, senior military, etc. The food and vodka was accompanied by the saddest Polish orchestra I have ever heard.

Great parts of the city were closed to us. We couldn't go to the port, for example. We could go outside of town — towards the north — on one designated road, but only 19 kilometers. There was a barrier with an armed guard, and we could go no farther. We'd

go out sometimes in good weather and have a picnic, just short of the barrier. Always we were followed.

My Stanford friend Major Olson from the Military Mission (later an FSO and Ambassador to Sierra Leone) came out from Moscow in early 1943 to inspect the port. The object was to see if it was capable of handling the amount of Lend-Lease material which it was being planned to send through it (with the Northern Route to Murmansk now abandoned). Olson judged it to be capable. But after listening to our complaints about our isolation in Vladivostok, he said, “Oh, you guys are all exaggerating. We don't get treated that badly in Moscow”. So we said, “We'll show you”.

We got together seven Americans from the Consulate General: two non-career Vice Consuls, three personnel from the Naval Observer's office (always in civilian clothes), Olson, and myself. (We didn't try to include Angus Ward, the Consul General, who was not one for jokes.) One of us left the building and turned left. From across the street a man emerged and followed him. Then another American, promptly followed by another NKVD man from across the street. Then another, and so on, until we were a procession of fourteen people, discreetly separated one from the other, trailing through the city in single file. Olson was convinced.

We had a car, a station-wagon, but if we tried to get too clever and dodged the NKVD car that always followed us, we paid. If, after such a success, we would park outside the Chelyuskin and go in for a mild celebration, while we were upstairs the NKVD would puncture our tires with an ice pick. This was no joke because we couldn't possibly get another tire. We did a lot of repair work.

In that restaurant, by the way, we several times saw the brother-in-law of the great black American singer —

Q: Paul Robeson?

McCARGAR: Robeson. I believe the brother-in-law's name was Hunt. He had stayed on in the Soviet Union , and made his living as a wrestler — what the Russians called “Franzuski Boks.” But he would never speak with us. I assume he was scared to. And as a matter of courtesy to him, not to complicate his life, we didn't speak to him.

That was a minor example of what we lived with. A more striking one was provided by a man named Bill Wallace, who came out from Moscow to replace our non-career Vice Consul, Don Nichols. (Wallace had been a Marine in Shanghai before the war. At some point I gather he left the Marine Corps and was taken on the staff of the Shanghai Consulate General.) Come December 1941 he was interned with the rest of our diplomatic and consular personnel, then sent by ship to Louren#o Marques, in Mozambique, for exchange against the Japanese coming from internment in the U.S. But Wallace didn't get on the “Gripsholm” for the rest of the voyage to America. He was sent straight on from Louren#o Marques to Moscow. (In those days when the Moscow Embassy said it wanted personnel, it got them.)

On Wallace's train from Moscow to Vladivostok, there was an absolutely stunning strawberry blond Russian girl on her way to the Soviet Naval Attach#'s office in Washington, D.C.. She had to stay in the Chelyuskin Hotel for about a week until her ship sailed. Wallace was also staying in the hotel, until Nichols' quarters in the Consulate General became available. He and the girl were together all the time. Everything seemed happy and pleasant; Wallace was so taken with the girl, and spent so much time with her in that one week, that he had no time to absorb our complaints about life in Vladivostok.

One day we took this girl, along with Olson — and Wallace, of course — in the station wagon for a tour of the city — or of those parts where we could go. One place I knew how to reach was a road on the crest of the range of hills at what was then the northern edge of the city. From there you could see the entire port, the bays, the islands protecting the approaches from the sea, the sea itself.

Sure enough, as we gazed at this splendid panorama, a man in a naval officer's uniform came up to the car, and said, “Dokumenti,” meaning, “Show me your papers.” I said, “I don't believe we have to,” and argued with him. He said, “According to Soviet law, an officer in the armed forces may ask anyone, including diplomatic personnel, for their documents at any time.” I don't recall whether he alleged that this was especially so in wartime. But there were others passing by about. So, in the end, I showed mine, and the others in the car showed theirs. Then Wallaces' beautiful girl, who by now began to realize what was coming, had to show hers. The Navy officer wrote something down and handed her papers back. With a palpable chill in the car, we returned to the Chelyuskin Hotel.

The next morning she was called in by the NKVD, fired from her post in Washington, and sent back to Moscow by the next train. Wallace supported her financially from Vladivostok through friends in the Embassy. Eventually, a year or two later, after he had been transferred to Moscow, they were married. They had a child. But there wasn't any hope of getting Wallace's wife, or the child, out of the Soviet Union. The war was over; life, and relations with America, had become even harsher. Wallace's wife was taken first by the MVD (successor to the NKVD), and the child stayed with the grandmother. Then the grandmother was arrested. With the arrest of the grandmother, Wallace who had meanwhile been transferred from Moscow, never knew what became of his child. I don't know if Wallace still lives (he left the Service after his next assignment). But this was a typical story of that time.

I know of other situations that I will not mention on this occasion, with happier outcomes — thanks to greater support from the Department. (Loy Henderson's departure from Soviet Affairs did not improve matters — though Chip Bohlen did marvelously well while he was directly in charge). Shortly before I arrived in the Soviet Union, there was one case, an FSO, an especially capable and attractive Officer, who became in due course a very prominent Ambassador. His particular friend in Moscow became pregnant. Accompanied by an Assistant Military Attach#, with an exit visa for the lady, the three headed for Tehran

by train. This was before the Germans blocked that route. But on the train, she gave birth. Well, the exit visa was for three adults and here suddenly were three adults and an infant who had been born in the Soviet Union. A very rough problem. The only reason it was resolved in favor of the departure of all four persons was that the Officer got on the telephone to Loy Henderson, and Henderson, discreetly but effectively, exerted the necessary pressure on the Soviets. It worked. They were let out. But it was very exceptional.

Q: What were you doing in Vladivostok?

McCARGAR: Professionally, I issued two visas. One of them was to the father of a very well-known film producer of Russian origin in Hollywood. He later put out a successful film called “Tales of Manhattan.”

Q: That was with Charles Boyer.

McCARGAR: Somehow this producer had gotten to the White House, so the right help came. But as Angus Ward never tired of telling me, “You are personally responsible for these visas.” So I put this poor old gentleman through all the phases of the required interrogation. “Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?” I was not exactly ashamed; this was my sworn duty (said Angus Ward), but it was an occasion I was happy to forget. The victim of all this was very sweet and very patient. Quietly, he said “I know you have to do this.” As the story came out later, the Soviets tried to blackmail the son with threats about the father, and the son went to the FBI and became an agent against the Soviets. Needless to say, when this all came out, years later, it was with maximum publicity for the producer.

The other one I was not at all happy about. This one came through with direct White House intervention. The visa applicant, who showed up at the Consulate General almost simultaneously with a cabled notification from the Department citing White House interest, was a Spaniard named Jesus Hernandez. He was applying for a transit visa to go to

Mexico. Hernandez, as I well knew (from my own studies, not from State Department files) had been the chief Soviet liquidator in Spain during the Civil War there, slaughtering first the POUM, then the Spanish Communist Party itself. I learned more about Hernandez later, and although I knew enough about him at the time, it was pretty clear that if I didn't issue this visa I was going to get into trouble.

Q: Was the security lapse due to Roosevelt?

McCARGAR: That was our assumption. It was not necessarily true. I said the White House was interested in this case. The White House is a big place — even if it is bigger today, it's connections were legion then. I subsequently came to believe that Mrs. Roosevelt was the sponsor for Hernandez. Not for any sinister reasons or connections on that great lady's part. But someone got to her, and she probably said, “Oh, yes, of course, we should help any victim of the Spanish Civil War.” Since Hernandez's request was for a transit visa, I gave it. He was a very somber type. To ask him, when I knew perfectly well, “Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?” made no sense at all. He knew that I knew what he had done in Spain. He went on to Mexico. There he became one of the chief operators for the NKVD, later MVD and then the KGB (or GRU, Soviet Military Intelligence).

Q: Was he involved in the Trotsky business, or had that happened already?

McCARGAR: No. That had happened already. It was something I had been very interested in. One of my professors at Stanford was a great friend of Trotsky — or purported to be. Perhaps he was merely a sympathizer. But he returned one autumn from his annual visit to Trotsky in Mexico, at just the time the University was constructing the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace. He told Trotsky about this new institution, and Trotsky said, “That is exactly the way it will be. First war, then revolution, then peace.”

I don't know if you ever knew Bob McGregor? McGregor had been in our Mexico City Embassy charged with contact with Trotsky. He got to Trotsky's villa very shortly the

assassin had struck. Trotsky was still alive. He lived for hours after the blow, with the axe in his skull. McGregor had told me all about it in the Department before I went to the Soviet Union. I used to amuse myself going out on the Trans-Siberian with this knowledge. You could talk to people on the train. I remember getting friendly with one chap and saying “By the way, whatever happened to Trotsky?”. The look was either of terror or total ignorance. The name had been absolutely purged from existence, a mere fifteen years after Stalin had bested him in their intra-Party rivalry.

I did come across one small incident that might be of interest. On that train, near Irkutsk, they took on fresh onions. (Mostly, our food in restaurant car was one meal a day, usually lopsha soup. Lopsha is a pasta, with little grey dots in it. It's revolting. The meal, day after day, was lopsha soup, followed by lopsha, and that was it.) But at Irkutsk they took on green onions, other delicacies — and vodka, which was served at the noon meal. In short order, that train was a shambles. I had a cabin in one of those Wagons-Lits cars — called “Mezhdunarodniy (International) class,” being above “soft class” and “hard class” — that had originally belonged to the Belgians (and I think were legally still their property). They were very comfortable, beautifully done. The corridors had been decorated with an occasional bust, or relief, of Lenin, and appropriate quotations or slogan. As I made my way back from the restaurant car my car attendant came along and said, “Come with me.” He led me to my compartment, put me in, and locked the door. There was a huge, very handsome Russian who was also in that car, who was apparently out to get “the foreigner” (me) for some reason or other. I remember him having said to me, at one point, loudly and aggressively, “Ya chistiy russki!” (I am pure Russian!) He tore that car up including busting the bust of Lenin. They took him off the train at the next stop. I don't know what happened to him.

Q: You were there as a regular Vice Consul, is that right?. In the first place could you talk about the Consulate and also about Angus Ward. I've gotten little vignettes of Angus Ward in Harbin and also in Kabul, but I'd like to get something about him.

McCARGAR: Harbin before the war?

Q: Harbin after the war, when he was arrested by the Chinese.

McCARGAR: As a Vice Consul, besides the two visas that I issued, I also issued crew list visas, covering the crews of the Soviet Merchant Marine then beginning to go to our West Coast for Lend-Lease supplies. I also read the papers, monitored the radio (Vladivostok was a place where radio signals bounced, and one of our duties was frequent monitoring — of broadcasts almost entirely incomprehensible to most of us), and tried to see as much of the city as I could.

I also performed one consular function that brought echoes from the past. One of the diplomatic pouches I brought out from Moscow contained a request to the Vladivostok Consulate General, forwarded by the Department, from Professor Kyril Brynner, one of my Stanford professors of Russian, asking for copies of the divorce papers of his parents, filed at Vladivostok in, I believe, 1921 or 22. I was happy to provide this service, and in due course obtained the requested document from the local representative of the Narkomindel (Foreign Office). I promptly sent it on by pouch to Washington, for forwarding to Stanford, accompanied by a note to my former professor, stating that in view of the difficulties of wartime correspondence and financial exchange, and with gratitude for his teaching, I had paid the required Consular fee out of my own pocket. It was minimal. But I never heard another word from Brynner. Except that at a lunch with some young Russian Far East specialists (one Navy, one USIA) this year, 1995, I learned to my astonishment that my Professor Brynner was a close relative of the actor, Yul Brynner.

As for Angus Ward, Loy Henderson had spoken to me before I left for Russia. “I'm going to tell you about Angus Ward,” he said. “Ward has a terrible temper. He once strangled a dog in Manchuria with his bare hands. Since then he tries to keep himself under control. So watch his temper”. He said, “The other thing is that Angus, for one reason or another, is not sending us any political material. We get nothing out of the Vladivostok Consulate.”

He didn't say what I should do about that. He just mentioned it. Not long after I'd been in Vladivostok, 6 weeks or so, maybe 2 months, Ward went off to Moscow. He needed a little break. He had his wife with him.

Q: His wife was?

McCARGAR: He had a Finnish wife who was very much socially pre-revolutionary Russia. She never, or seldom, talked politics, but it was clear that for her Finland was, at least socially, still the Imperial Grand Duchy.

With Ward away I was left in charge. The first thing I did was to institute a weekly round-up of what was going on in our area. We had a Naval Attach#, in civilian clothes, there at that time with a yeoman and a secretary. We would put together whatever seemed noteworthy: such and such a cruiser is in harbor, this has happened, the paper says this, Comrade Pegov is running for First Secretary of the Krai Party, and so forth. This went on for the whole two months that Ward was gone. When he came back he didn't say a word. But he did not continue the weekly political cable. I got the point that he wasn't happy about my little innovation.

We got along all right. One thing amused me about Ward. He was a Canadian by birth, and a naturalized U. S. citizen. He was furious with Foreign Service Officers who retired abroad. He just couldn't think of anything worse than that. There was at that time a Foreign Service Officer named Washington — I don't recall his first name, because when I try to I always confuse him with the first elected Mayor of Washington, D.C. But his name was Washington. Ward used to carry on about this man. He said, “Can you imagine, when he retired , he went to —[I can't remember where, but it was not in the United States]!” And Ward would fulminate about this, damning his “disloyal” colleague. Twenty years later, my wife and I spent a year in Spain. We were just leaving to go back to France, and I thought, what the hell. I knew Ward was then living in retirement in Coin, inland from the Costa Brava. So I telephoned Angus and he invited me to lunch. After finding the residence of “El

Embajador," as he was known in town, I found Ward and Mrs. Ward in a very expansive layout. I asked him how things were going. He was still working on his Mongolian-English dictionary (that he had been working on twenty years before, that went on forever, and never was published). Anyway, I couldn't resist it, I said "Mr. Ambassador," (he enjoyed the courtesy, as we all would), "Tell me, here you are in Spain and I knew that you'd retired to Virginia. Is there something preferable here?" Both he and his wife came out with the same immediate answer. Very forcefully, they said, "You can't get decent servants in Virginia." So they moved to Spain.

Q: Can you talk a little about Mrs. Ward, because I've heard stories of her as being very difficult.

McCARGAR: She was extremely difficult. I was very careful, but one time I fell afoul of her. There was nothing to do. She asked for the station-wagon to be provided with a driver for some personal errand that she wanted. It conflicted with something we needed in the Consulate General at that time. In effect, as politely as I could, I refused it. Having explained the circumstances, I said, "Can we do this some other time?" She came down on me. First of all she came in and gave me hell. Then, of course, she got Angus to give me a little bit of hell too. He was less obnoxious than she was. She was really impossible. Otherwise, she could be charming. She made a perfectly marvelous salmon caviar dish. Angus had a couple of little dinghies, and he'd go out on Amur Bay and come back with a salmon, which he'd split it open. She'd do the red caviar — of which I can never get enough — with sour cream and onions. Admired, she was in her element at that time. Otherwise, I found her to be a very embittered woman. It was obvious she loathed the Russians, that is, the Bolshevik Russians.

Our other problem was the Japanese Consulate General. The Japanese Consul General's residence was next to Ward's, and their relations couldn't have been worse. Quite apart from the war going on, there was another going on over the fence between them, because

Ward's cat would go over to the Japanese side. The Japanese, outraged, would throw the cat back over the fence. And so on, back and forth.

Our only other colleagues were the Chinese. The Chinese Consul General, Chang Da-Tien, was married to a Russian woman. They had a son, Dima, in his early 20's, who later had a very successful career in the Diplomatic Service of Taiwan. He was fluent in Chinese, English, and Russian. He was more fun than the rest. He had a vivacious sense of humor. Of his father's Consulate, Dima said, with much laughter, “We have a staff over there, but they all sit around playing mah jong, and that, of course, is forbidden by the Chinese Government. But they still play mah jong.” He also told a story about going up to inspect the Chinese Consulate at Blagoveshchensk, a small, miserable, swampy town way north on the Amur River. Apparently they found their local Consul cowering on a table with water swirling all around the Consulate in one of the frequent floods that inundated the place. They rescued him. Dima was pleasant company and very helpful to us. He relieved some of the tedium.As for my other duties, I was, of course, coding and decoding.

Q: What about American seamen? Did they get in trouble, go to jail?

McCARGAR: There were no Americans, seamen or any other kind. As I came to know as a naval officer several years later, the only traffic across the North Pacific was Soviet.

Q: That's because of the war with the Japanese. You really couldn't get anything through the Pacific. You were there '42 to '43? What were the signs of the threat of the Japanese? The Guangdong Army at that time (later it switched to the other side) must have been a concern.

McCARGAR: It was indeed. We were very conscious of the Guangdong Army, not many miles away to the west, in neighboring Manchuria. At one point we sat around — we were instructed to do so, but we already thought we'd better do it for our own sakes — to elaborate an evacuation plan in case the Japanese struck. That, as the years passed, I realized was one of the more pathetic exercises we ever engaged in. We were totally

ignorant: we hadn't the vaguest idea what the terrain was like. Because, if you got out you wanted to get north, through the mountains, or along the Pacific coast, the Sea of Japan, actually. We had no idea of the terrain, of the facilities, the communications, the road network — nothing. We were always uneasy about that but there was nothing we could do about it. We had no advice of any sort from the Department nor from Moscow on that subject, or on any other subject for that matter. And, as I said earlier, Vladivostok was a place where radio waves bounced. We were also thus provided with quite a receiver. So we'd sit around, twirl the dial, and write reports of what we thought we heard. This was done for the FBIS which already existed at that time. It kept us occupied.

Vladivostok was also a great place for reading. I finally got a shipment through the port that included a box of books (the Soviet Customs were fascinated by Emil Ludwig's biography of Stalin, a staple of the time). I was almost as grateful for the books as for the food that came with them. One of the books, incidentally, was Koestler's Darkness At Noon. I let our secretary, Ida Borisovna Minovich (who was permanently frantic over the possibility that her young son would reach draft age before the war ended). In any event, at her request, I lent her Koestler's novel. Her comment on returning it was, I thought, a masterpiece of diplomacy, considering her circumstances. “You know,” she said, “I think if Stalin were to read this [the implication was clear that he would not] he would say, 'This is the truth.'”

I also had a few illnesses while I was there. Scurvy was one, which would years later cost me my teeth much earlier than normal. Then I came down with erysipelas, a streptococcic infection. At first I got it on my left hand. Our medical recourse was something called the Physiotherapyucheskiy Institut, with a very nice chief physician named Rutkovski. He was great friends with Ward. Erysipelas, sometimes confused today with cellulitis, is not a joke. Woodrow Wilson's (or Coolidge's) son died of it, after a game of tennis at the White House. Rutkovski's reaction was prompt. He came around and he did something I'd never heard of. I was later told by the Navy doctor at the Moscow Embassy, “Jesus, we stopped doing that 50 years ago.” The procedure is to take blood out of the infected

limb and then jab it in your rear end. It produces a splendid fever, and apparently sets up enough antibodies to dispel the infection. Then I got it in my middle ear, which almost drove me right out of my mind. Sulfa drugs were all there was at that time, and they were very scarce. But they worked.

In the course of this second illness I conceived a great longing for fruit. It was overwhelming. One of my colleagues, a non-career Vice Consul, Don Nichols, the one later relieved by Bill Wallace, had a very well-stocked larder. He came to see me in my apartment, and I said “Don, you pick any can of fruit that you have and I'll give you five dollars for it”. And he gave me a can of black cherries, which is still the best fruit I've tasted in my life. Also, he took the five dollars.

When I got my own shipment across the Pacific it included a little phonograph my brother-in-law sent me. I had two records. One of them was Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto — not all of it, just part. The other was a thing I picked up in Moscow. It was a Jewish folk song called Dyecyat' Docheri (Ten Daughters). It was delightful. I played both records night after night and never tired of them.

Q: You went back to Moscow for a while?

McCARGAR: Yes. I was there for about a month the second time.

Q: Had things changed much?

McCARGAR: Enormously.

Q: How about your trip across, was it still the 12 days?

McCARGAR: It was still 12 days. You still had to have your own food and you still had to provide for yourself the best you could. But they didn't get the vodka aboard on this trip so we got through it uneventfully. I must have had 14 mail sacks with me. By the time we got to Moscow I had learned enough about the Soviet Union so, after I unloaded them onto

the quai, I summoned a railroad man there and said “I want the Nachal'nik NKVD,” (the chief of the NKVD), enough to terrorize any citizen in those days. He went off in a great rush and sure enough there came the chief of the NKVD at that railroad station. A nice young officer, cold but very efficient. I identified myself, showed him my passport, and said “I need assistance here. I can't possibly get these out by myself to a taxi”. So the orders were given. They all danced around him. In a flash my sacks and I were out of the station alongside a taxi. You learned that that was the way to get things done in the Soviet Union of that day.

One night in Moscow during that second stay — I had always had a great, and idiotic, desire to see the inside of the Lyublyanka, the prison attached to NKVD headquarters where so many terrible things had taken place — and so I acted on it.

Q: This is the prison of the NKVD?

McCARGAR: Yes. It was not far from Red Square. The curfew was 11 o'clock and I managed to be out after 11 in Red Square. As I walked past the GOUM department store, towards the National Hotel where I was staying, a Red Army soldier came up and stopped me. I identified myself, and he said “I'm sorry, you're out after the curfew. You've got to come with me”. He collected a fair number of people including a two-star general — a Red Army general, not an NKVD general. There were about a dozen or fifteen of us, and we were marched over to what was apparently a sort of police station in the Lyublyanka, presided over by a young NKVD Captain. He went through each case and when he got to the general, you should have heard what he said to that general. For starters, he said, “General, you're a disgrace to the uniform. You're a disgrace to the Soviet Union. You're a blockhead.” And he went on talking this way — “You know better than to be out after the curfew.” The General kept saying, “Yes, but...,” trying to explain himself, and getting nowhere. The Captain really gave him hell and sent him off to a cell. In due course we were all relegated to cells, where we spent the night — but, interestingly enough, not more than three or four to a cell. My cellmates simply accepted the situation and attempted to

sleep on the benches or floor. There was a strong atmosphere of misery, nonetheless. The Captain finally called me in from my cell. Stony-faced, he said “I've called your Embassy and they've never heard of you.” A typical trick to produce merriment among the colleagues. The next morning somebody admitted that, yes, they did know me, and I was released. The important point was that the speech and attitude of this junior NKVD officer to the General showed precisely the relationship between the NKVD and the Red Army.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

McCARGAR: Standley was still the Ambassador in Moscow.

Q: He'd returned?

McCARGAR: Yes. The whole Embassy — indeed, the entire Diplomatic Corps — had moved back up from Kuibyshev. As I told you, coming across the Trans-Siberian, I did notice the changes in cities like Novosibirsk. It was absolutely astounding. Omsk as well. The industry that the Soviets had moved from European Russia — you could see from the train. The growth of these cities and the work that was being done there was visible. In Moscow the Embassy's facilities were by now full up, and that's why I had to stay in a hotel. The National was all right — much sought after, in fact. I spent about a month at the National Hotel.

Q: Did you find the work at the Embassy — were they well connected to the Soviet Government?

McCARGAR: There was still this tension between the Military Mission and the Embassy itself. By then Ambassador Standley had made his famous denunciation of the Russians' non-appreciation and non-mention of American aid and General Faymonville was publicly regretting that. I had a talk with Faymonville, and he asked me about Vladivostok. I told him it was a prison for us, and described how we were treated. I told him who the head of the NKVD in the Primorsk Krai was — which I never even told Angus Ward, because

Angus wasn't interested. But I added that the NKVD head in the Primorsk Krai (Gvishiani — whose son married Prime Minister Kosygin's daughter years later, and made something of a splash on the international scene) was one of Stalin's Georgian thug friends. I did all this, needless to say, in the hopes that he might confide in Beria in one of their friendly sessions — though I did not ask it.

But Faymonville said, “Well, you know how it is. Out at the end of the line they get the order. Then they make it much tougher than it really is at the beginning because they want to make sure they're doing the right thing”. He was excusing the whole thing. Actually at that time, the great change was taking place. General Dean was being sent out to replace Faymonville — who, incidentally, was to be reduced in rank. When he went back to the United States, his Brigadier-General's star was taken from him, and he reverted to Colonel. Admiral Standley left a month or two later, and was replaced by Averell Harriman. This was all in the works while I was in Moscow, although I was not told, since it was all still confidential.

Actually, it was Tommy Thompson and I who went out together through Tehran. Tommy was on his way to London for vacation. This was September of 1943. I asked Tommy, “What are you going to London on vacation for?” and he gave a very good answer. He said, “London is the most exciting city in the world to be in at this moment.” We dined with friends of his in Tehran, whose names I don't remember. All I remember is that I was humiliated because a Russian in Vladivostok, one of the few I'd encountered at some point there, gave me a bottle of wine, saying proudly, “This is the greatest wine ever made in Russia.” So I carried this wine across the whole Soviet Union, down all the way to Tehran. And insisted on providing it for the dinner given by Tommy's Embassy friends in Tehran. We opened it and it was vile stuff. Tommy wouldn't let me forget that. We had to go through Abadan, filled with American equipment going up the line to the Soviet Union.

Then we flew on from there to Cairo where we had dinner with Alexander Kirk, who was then the Minister. Kirk was a most extraordinary man. I'm surprised there's been so little

attention paid to him and his career in the Foreign Service. (When he died, in Colorado, in the eighties, Beatrice Strauss, the daughter of William Phillips, who knew Kirk when her father was Ambassador to Italy, agreed with me that he had been a first-rate diplomat, and insufficiently recognized as such.) First of all, at dinner, Kirk said that he was very proud to have been “a poke in the eye” to all the major governments of the time. He had served in Moscow, Berlin, and Rome at the moment that the Ambassador at each of those posts was withdrawn as a sign of American displeasure, and he was left as Charg# d'Affaires. He was very proud of this.

In some ways Kirk was rather strange. He always wore only gray. I watched him once at a cocktail party. He was a wizard at it. He never gave more than four minutes — to any such function. He greeted his host, made a few quick turns and was out, because he deplored these social functions. He also made a remark at our dinner with him at the Residence which rested in my mind. The Allies had already gone into Sicily, and I think had begun their assault on the peninsula itself. Apropos of the political problems surrounding these military operations, Kirk, who knew a lot about Italy, said, “I can't imagine who is advising the President on Italian policy but, judging from the results, it must be an Italian”.

From Cairo I made my way back, across Africa, then across the South Atlantic. It was a totally different performance from the previous trip across.

Q: How did you get across the Atlantic?

McCARGAR: First of all, it was one straight flight from Cairo to Accra, in the Gold Coast (now Ghana, of course). From Accra we flew, in land planes, to Ascension Island, where the Army engineers had carved the landing strip right through the mountain which makes up most of the island. We fueled there and then flew onto Natal, Brazil. You got a moment's rest and then were put on another plane to Belem, which had a large contingent of American troops there, and had lost a good deal of the colorful life it had manifested two years earlier. From there we were loaded onto a C-46 (a Curtiss-Wright plane which was

reputed, no doubt wrongly — we hoped — to lose its wings in turbulent weather), and that plane just kept going forever and ever until we got to Miami.

There I got a quick lesson in the difference between being a diplomat abroad and one at home. The Customs inspector said to me — mind you, we were all pretty exhausted — “Open your bag.” I said, “Do I have to do that?” and he said, “Well, who are you?” I answered, I thought in a normal way, “I'm Third Secretary of the American Embassy in Moscow.” He said, “What?” So a little more loudly I repeated myself. He then said, “I didn't get you — you're what?” This time I gave it full force. “Third Secretary of the American Embassy in Moscow!” He looked at me and said, “That's slicing it sort of thin, isn't it?”

Q: I wonder if we could stop at this point and pick it up next time?

McCARGAR: A week after I came back from the Soviet Union I was examined in Bethesda Naval Hospital. Then I was summoned to an interview with Howland Shaw. I went into the Assistant Secretary's office (it overlooked the West Wing of the White House, that alone being enough to impress anyone). There was Shaw, handsome as ever, and affable. “Well, Mr. McCargar,” he said, in a markedly sympathetic fashion, “tell me about Vladivostok.” One can be so stupid sometimes. (Some years later, remembering this exchange with Howland Shaw, I delighted in one of Dean Acheson's comments in an essay, in which he explained the attraction of cabinet-making to him: “It is a steady reminder of how stupid one can really be,” he wrote).

I told Assistant Secretary Shaw that Vladivostok was a prison. I tried to explain the frustration of living in a city of 220,000 people, and not be able to touch anyone of them, to touch the life of the city, to be a part of it. I went on in this vein and got it all off my chest. Shaw, now looking more magisterial than sympathetic, said, “Oh, come, come, Mr. McCargar, you can't go through life being that sensitive.” To which he added, after a brief pause, “After all, you were saving money.”

This was a sore rebuff for me. I might as well add now that I got my own back while at my next post — Santo Domingo. My first Ambassador there was Avra Warren, who taught me a lot about politics. At one point I told him, “Look, I've got all of this material that I learned about the Soviet Far East. What I want to do is send it to the Department. That's where it'll be useful. It's no good just sitting in my brain”. Warren said, “You'd better be very careful about this. What you do is, you write to Chip Bohlen. You say that you have this material. Would he like it? If you get a letter from him asking you for it, then you're covered”. I was learning. So that's exactly what I did, sending Bohlen the Table of Contents.

Q: Chip Bohlen was doing what at that time?

McCARGAR: Chip was the Russian Desk Officer. He'd taken Loy Henderson's place, Loy having been exiled, as I recall, as Minister to Iraq, being one of those regarded by the White House at the time as too anti-Soviet.

In any event, Bohlen wrote back saying he would like to see my report. I had written the report, and had showed it to Ambassador Warren. His comment was, “You really do want to get into trouble, don't you?” I sent the report to Bohlen. It was titled General Political Conditions in the Primorsk Krai, August 1942 to August 1943, and ran 23 pages single-spaced (the old State Department long pages). I told everything I knew, which was a lot more than Angus Ward had ever conveyed to anyone. I sent it to Washington on March 7, 1944. In May I received a letter dated the 11th, signed by Dean Acheson, which said, “The Department is pleased to advise you that, because of its interest in the subject and of the value of the information contained in your memorandum, it has been given a rating of EXCELLENT. Your industry and initiative in preparing it are commended.” It was a nice ending to that circle.

Q: Wasn't that nice. Wasn't that wonderful. Why don't we stop here. We'll pick up on your time in Santo Domingo and then continue on.

Today is the 27th of April, 1995. There are a couple of things you wanted to go back to. Why don't we do that.

Q: You were going to describe the Consulate General at Vladivostok and the city itself.

McCARGAR: Yes. The Consulate General, during the love affair between Hitler and Stalin, had been the German Consulate General. When that fell apart, the Americans latched on to the building right away and Angus Ward was sent our from Moscow in 1941 to open the office. Prior to that, in late 1939, Angus had been sent, during the confused period of the Russo-German partition of Poland, to the Lvov region to help Americans caught in the turmoil. There were a lot of American citizens in southeastern Poland —Volhynia, Podolia, lands that would end up being, not in Poland, but in the Soviet Union (and ultimately in Ukraine!). Among those Ward found was a young man named Tony Lapka, an American citizen by birth (although I think his residence in the United States had been minimal). Ward took Lapka on as a U. S. Government employee, used him as a kind of handy man in Lvov and Moscow, and then took him on out to Vladivostok. It was Lapka who tried to keep the place more or less going physically.

The Consulate General was on Tigrovaya Ulitsa, which is Tiger Street. It was so named because sometime in 1910, or between 1900 and 1910, somebody saw a tiger, a Siberian tiger, on that street. I understand there are very few of those Siberian tigers left. I never saw one. Tiger Street, like much of the city, was a steep hill. To the south of the Consulate General, going uphill, the street went along the west side of a ridge running north and south which formed, on its opposite, eastern side one edge of the Zolotoi Rog, the Golden Horn, the inner harbor of Vladivostok. The shape and formation of Vladivostok's Golden Horn is remarkably similar to that of its Istanbul namesake. It must have excited the imagination of the first Russian officer to look on it. The part of the Golden Horn before and at the bend was the commercial port. Beyond that was the naval port. Both were forbidden to us.

If we went downhill from the entrance to the Consulate General, the first cross street we came to was Leninskaya Ulitsa, at the corner of which was the Chelyuskin Hotel, locus of our social life. If you continued straight ahead on Tiger Street, it went down to a small inlet of Amur Bay (where Ward kept his boats), on the edge of which was what was still known as the Kitaiskiy Rinok — the Chinese Market. It was a free market bazaar, permitted by the authorities. The real currency of the day was vodka — one bottle of vodka, a pair of shoes.

If you turned to the right from Tiger Street, and went along Lenin Street past the Chelyuskin, you passed, in sequence, the Zolotoi Rog Hotel, with a nearby theater, in a side street, the local department store on the left, then a movie house, then the commercial port, and, past the naval port, the House of Culture and Rest of the Pacific Ocean Fleet. We sometimes went to public dances in a garden there in summer. We were not allowed in any of these local landmarks, the Fleet's Culture and Rest garden excepted. For the department store, or the movie house, we were obliged to write a letter to the Diplomatic Agent of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, who would then issue us tickets or passes, as might be the case. The citizens of the town, of course, had free access to all these oases — except the ports.

I should also mention that, as far as the citizens of Vladivostok were concerned, there had been a tremendous upheaval in the years 1936, 1937, and 1938. The Koreans were moved out first. Then — a major blow to the life of the city — the Chinese had been moved out. It was the Chinese who provided the fresh vegetables and were, above all, the carriers of water from the pumps at street level, up the hills to the houses and apartments without running water. Then most of the population was moved out, the Russian population, that is, and replaced with Ukrainian deportees. There were a lot of Ukrainians in the city. There were a few old residents, but not many. This was part of Stalin's moving populations around and leaving them in odd places where they were not familiar with the terrain or anything else. So that was the city — which did boast, on another main street at right angles to Lenin Street, a main Post Office, and, further up the

hill, the city's Park of Culture and Rest, which included a parachute jump — a sport then much in vogue.

We made no use of the department store (except once, when Ward and I went there with official permission, to counter a report spreading in the city that a shipment of shoes, which fell apart after one wearing, were American; we established that they were Argentine, and then made our point loudly.) We were allowed, once as I recall, to attend entertainment at the theater near the Zolotoi Rog Hotel. While the occasion was not without the usual agitprop trimmings, they were reasonable enough for wartime, and the performance was first-rate. The star was an Uzbek singer and dancer, Tamara Khanum, who was also a Captain in the Red Army, a member of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet, and of the USSR Supreme Soviet. She was accompanied by a stringed instrument, and by a Central Asian instrument called a bubnya, almost identical to a tambourine. Tamara Khanum appeared in Red Army uniform, and when she bowed to the audience, her long black hair falling in plaits on either side of her side, next to the brilliant gold shoulder boards of her military rank (the Tsarist epaulettes and ranks had only recently been restored to the Soviet Armed Forces by Stalin) the effect was impressive. But the most impressive was the bubnya player. At intervals, he would toss his instrument to the top of the proscenium arch, and as it fell back down he would catch it in his right hand, between his thumb and forefinger, simultaneously slapping the stretched skin of the instrument with his four fingers, producing a cataclysmic bang that almost shook the theater. The audience loved it, and so did I.

Until the next day, when we were received by the three artists in their rooms at the Chelyuskin. Tamara Khanum radiated presence and charm, and quickly introduced her colleagues. The bubnya player gave me a big smile, and, knowing what was coming, proffered his right hand. I shook it — and, crying out with pain, wondered if I could ever use my right hand again. The man had a muscle between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand that was more like a biceps. Hence the cataclysmic bang.

In the Consulate General, the furnace was in the basement. On the first floor, on the right, were four rooms: one was Ward's office, one was my office, just outside Ward's, another was the non-career Vice Consul's, and then a small office near the entrance for Ida Borisovna, the Russian secretary. Across the hallway was the Naval Observer's office, who, as I said before, was in civilian clothes. He had a yeoman and a secretary. (I think that the secretary, Irene Matusis, came to a bad end. As I recall, she had been born in New York in 1914 of Russian parents, who subsequently returned. As a dual national the Soviets refused all representations in her behalf by the Moscow Embassy. After her arrest by the Soviets in 1947, she was sentenced to three to five years in a labor camp.) The building's second floor had two apartments, one for each of the Vice Consuls, with a steep garden behind, used mostly for drying laundry in good weather.

To give you a bit of the flavor, so far as I know, there are few survivors of the staff of the Consulate General of the 1941-1947 period. Ward's successor, O. Edmund Clubb (whose real interest was China) died several years ago. He was the last Consul General. After Clubb departed in 1946, Vladivostok was staffed by personnel from Moscow, assigned for six-months periods. The Consulate General was finally closed in August 1948 — as the Soviets closed their Consulates General in New York and San Francisco. There has been a story circulated all these years which, even if apocryphal, gives the flavor of American life in Vladivostok in those days. It is that as the Russians invaded Manchuria (and the northernmost Kuril Island, Paramushiro) in August 1945, the Diplomatic Agent of the (by then) Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned an officer from the American Consulate General to protest that the Americans were signaling to the Japanese across the bay, and that they must cease immediately. According to the story, the American officer who was told this, after the Americans had fought for four years across the Pacific to Japan itself, was so infuriated that it affected him physically. But, of course, this was the sort of thing that we went through all the time out there.

Q: Just an addendum - before we left our last session, you had mentioned the reason why you were moved out of Vladivostok, and why Tommy Thompson] accompanied you out of the Soviet Union. Why don't we talk a little about that to catch the flavor of the old Foreign Service?

McCARGAR: This had to do with our social life, not our professional life. Ward had Mrs. Ward, but the rest of us were quite alone. As one person put it some years later, he said, with fairly good humor, “Oh, Vladivostok was a series of one night stands four months apart”.

There were two instances of the cost of mixing with Soviet citizens of which I had personal knowledge. We always flirted with the waitresses in the Chelyuskin restaurant, who were responsive and always joked with us. One of the waitresses, a very pretty girl who had a small son, one night asked me to go to the movies with her. Her name was Valya. I said, “Valya, I can't do that. I have to ask permission to go the kino.” She was very offended, not at me, but that any such thing should be possible. She said, “I am a Soviet citizen, and if I want to invite you to go the movies with me, I can do so.” So I went. The film was “One Hundred Men and A Girl,” starring Deanna Durbin. You had to see the Russian subtitles on the screen to see what the agitprop people could do with a relatively silly movie, designed mainly to give Miss Durbin a chance to sing. The bloodstained capitalists were grinding this lovely young girl and an entire symphony orchestra into misery.

It was mid-winter, the theater smelled something awful (no one removed his or her coat in a Russian theater in cold weather, since there was no heat). So, when at last the show was over, I walked Valya home, which meant going straight up a mountain. We parted at her doorway and I slid back down to Lenin Street and home. At 5 or 6 the next morning, she was arrested. She and her child were taken away. They were sent, I later found out, to a concentration camp near Khabarovsk. Then they were relocated to Novosibirsk. It was

put in their dossier that they, she and her child, could never go again to the Primorsk Krai. Not even to visit.

Lapka, whom I spoke of earlier, our handy man, had made a courier trip to Moscow. He was coming back on the Trans-Siberian, in July 1943, and the train stopped in Novosibirsk. He got out to walk around (you'd go crazy if you didn't). And there was Valya, whom he also knew. He told her that I'd be leaving Vladivostok shortly for Moscow. In other words, I would be coming through Novosibirsk. So when I did leave, in August of 1943, the train stopped at 4 in the morning in Novosibirsk. I got out into this cavernous railroad station and there, close to a pillar, was Valya. She had been waiting all night, using as an excuse that she was waiting for the train to her village, some distance outside the city. She'd been watching the Moscow-bound train for a couple of weeks. A deeply touching moment, not to be forgotten. It belies what I said earlier about people getting the government they deserve. But cases like hers were very rare, no question. That kind of courage. I'd met her in the middle of winter and there was that brief and — as the saying goes — one innocent evening.

Later on, as summer broke out, and we all emerged from that dreadful icy cold (there was little snow in Vladivostok, almost all was blown away by the wild, icy wind that came straight out of Manchuria to the west), Bill Wallace and I went one night to the House of Culture and Rest of the Pacific Ocean Fleet, where they had a little orchestra playing in the garden. There was dancing and we saw two pretty girls. We invited them to dance and we all got along famously. My memory is not exactly clear whether it was that night, but I think it was that night — we all went back to the Consulate General, the four of us. The ladies spent the night, and either they were concerned about leaving, because of the NKVD watching across the street, or we explained to them that they should be. We therefore lifted them over the fence in the back of the building, and the NKVD never saw them. I am not certain, but I think we had two more weekends, one including even a picnic out near

the 19th kilometer barricade. Afterwards they came again to the Consulate General. This produced an absolute uproar.

On Monday morning, perhaps even Monday afternoon, these girls were still upstairs in the bedrooms. Ward returned to his office from a visit to the Diplomatic Agent — a career Soviet diplomat named Dyukarev (his young wife had died some months earlier; I last noted, years later, that he was Soviet Consul General in Milan). Ward had constant arguments with him. For example, one of their favorite arguments was about corn. Corn, in the Russian view, is not fit for human consumption. It is for pigs, at best cattle. Ward would say “You don't know what you're talking about. American corn...” etc, etc. This is the kind of relationship the two had. On that particular day Ward had apparently just made some marvelous point that humiliated the Russian. At that point Dyukarev punctured his bubble. He said “Oh, by the way, Mr. Ward, I must protest against your permitting Soviet citizens to establish residence in the American Consulate General. That is not within your rights.” Ward was stunned. “What are you talking about?” he said. Dyukarev answered, “There are two Soviet citizens living on the top floor there.” (During that particular weekend, the NKVD, which could accomplish miracles in wartime, had, without stepping on our property, installed very strong searchlights all around our building. No more surreptitious exits over the back fence. And they shone right into our windows. Typical NKVD hospitality, but since Ward didn't sleep in the Consulate General he hadn't noticed them.)

Ward returned to the office in a fury. He called me in and said something about “Is there a girl?” I said “Yes, there's a girl,” and he said “Get her out!” Then he called in Wallace, who said “Yes, there's a girl,” but in a tone that implied “So what?” Ward said, “She's established residence and that's illegal”. Wallace said, “Residence? She doesn't even have a change of skivvies! What are you talking about?” Ward said, “Get her out!” So the ladies were let out and were arrested. Actually, I'm not sure if the girl that was with Wallace was arrested. The girl who was with me was named Tamara (her family were Party members, and she worked in the port; blonde and blue-eyed, she once told me that her correct name was Tamisa Shakhlai — an unusual name that I find ethnically clueless).

She was arrested. She was let out, we saw some more of each other, and then she told me that she was pregnant. Then she disappeared, and her friend got word to Wallace that Tamara had been sent to a collective farm outside of Vladivostok. Gvishiani, the NKVD chief of the Krai (she told me she had been taken to see him), was obviously playing a potentially clever game.

So I asked Ward's permission to call on the Diplomatic Agent. I didn't tell him what is was about. I said it was a personal matter that I wanted to discuss with Dyukarev. Ward gave me permission, with no inquiries. Once received, I said to the Diplomatic Agent that I wanted Tamara released. He said, “Why are you interfering in our affairs?” and added some very derogatory remarks about our two female guests. I said, “I don't want the mother of my child working on the collective farm out there.” “Oh”, he said, “that's different.” He woke up and took great interest at that point. “Well, then,” he said, “I think we ought to make some arrangement here whereby you're responsible for the support of the child,” and so forth. I answered, “I'll take care of that myself,” and we parted. The girl was brought back to town and was allowed to see me, but they gave her an abortion. She didn't actually tell me that but I found out. They put her in a clinic in Vladivostok, where I visited her, gave her an abortion, and then let her out again. (Actually, four months after my departure I had a letter from Wallace saying he had seen her as a dancer on the stage of the theater near the Zolotoi Rog Hotel.)

I was very careful to tell Ward exactly what had transpired. After a day or so he started figuring out all kinds of complicated plots to fool the Russians. I said “Look, it's not necessary. I'm just not going to do anything about this, that's all. They're not going to get anything out of me. I'm not going to sign anything, and I'm not going to talk to them again about it.” At which time (Ward having done his own coding), word came in of my transfer to the Department, via Moscow. A week or so later I left. Tamara spent my last night in my apartment, and the next morning Dima Chang, the Chinese, sneaked her out so that Ward wouldn't see (the NKVD across the street obviously did), took her to the station, and put

her on the Moscow train in my compartment. She rode out 19 kilometers with me, and we parted, she to get the local back to town. It was all very dramatic.

This goes back to what I told you earlier about Loy Henderson. Loy had said to me in Washington before I left, “You tell us if you get into any kind of a jam with women there. We will get you out and nothing will appear in your record.” That word was kept. Nobody in the Foreign Service, or elsewhere in the Government has ever mentioned this to me. Nothing ever appeared in my record that I know of — assuming that Foreign Service Personnel were later obeying the Foreign Service Act of 1947, and showing me everything. I later received at least ten or a dozen Top Secret clearances, going into the middle 1980s. The question never arose. Henderson, and people like him, were men of their word.

Q: You mentioned that Tommy Thompson accompanied you partly to make sure that you got out?

McCARGAR: Yes. That was the whole point. In fact, I had to wait around for quite some time in Moscow. I fell ill so there was no great problem in waiting for Tommy's leave to come up so he could accompany me. While ill, incidentally, a young Russian lady whom I had known in Moscow in 1942, officially a Russian-language teacher for the Embassy staff, but also in 1943 the maitresse-en-titre of one of the Assistant Naval Attach#s, came to see me in my room at the National Hotel. She asked me about Vladivostok. Certain that the room was bugged, I gave her the whole story, at length. Among other things I complained about the very comfortable residence in Tiger Street, with full domestic staff, provided to Comrade Pegov, First Secretary of the Krai Party — a luxury I contrasted with that of the city's workers, who were on very short rations indeed. She listened, and finally, with a smile, she said, “You are more Communist than Stalin.”

I think much of all this helps to point out why the State Department personnel, at least those who had served in Moscow, or Kuibyshev, or Vladivostok, had a very definite anti-

Soviet bias (but not an anti-Russian bias). The officers that served there came away from this experience of Soviet treatment in the midst of a major war in which we were supplying them with all sorts of things and they were our allies with unavoidable resentment. For those in the State Department who knew, the experience on the ground was that we were basically being treated like enemies. As the revisionist historians get into all this, they should get a feel for the atmosphere at the time, and for how the Soviets operated.

Much of this led to other aspects of my later career which we'll be going into. That is to say, if you worked for the American Embassy or the American Consulate General in the time of Stalin in the Soviet Union (of course it was true even under his successors but particularly so under Stalin), you learned very quickly that the only methods which would help you to get your work done were clandestine. Open diplomacy? — forget it.

Q: Let's move back to when you went to Santo Domingo where you served from 1943 to 1944. Was that considered to be what you deserved ?

McCARGAR: Well, Ward had turned in a report on me which still to this day says absolutely nothing about the lady in Vladivostok. Nothing was ever said to me about that. (Except by Tommy Thompson, very briefly, in Moscow, where he was most disapproving.) In the Department some senior people knew about it, but whatever had been sent in had presumably been destroyed. (Some time later I got hints that suggested the matter was more widely known in the Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence — and, much later, an act by General Walter Bedell Smith, then Under Secretary of State, which strongly suggested that, with all his great qualities, of which he had no doubt himself, he was not a man of honor.)

But, to keep our eyes on 1943-44, obviously Ward had given me a very bad efficiency report. I remembered one part of it, which I found particularly insulting. It was that he said I couldn't tell the important from the unimportant. There were other criticisms, though he did state that I was absolutely honest.

Q: I remember one of my first ones. It was somewhat ingenuous. We remember these things.

McCARGAR: When I got to Santo Domingo, then Ciudad Trujillo, Avra Warren was the Ambassador, as I said above. This was just shortly after they had raised all Latin-American posts to Embassies.

Q: The Good Neighbor Policy.

McCARGAR: So here was Warren as Ambassador. I became very fond of him. He was a hard taskmaster, and a tough cookie. A very capable man. He looked at me the first time I walked into his office, and said, looking over the half-spectacles he enjoyed, “You know why you're here, don't you?” I said, “I think I can guess.” He looked me almost encouragingly, and said, “You do it right, and you'll be okay.” So I went into the Economic Section. Then I supervised the Consular Section. The Economic Section was far from fascinating, but I did my job. I wrote these flagrantly boring reports which appeared in whatever were the appropriate specialized publications. I did the special report, on my own, on Political Conditions in the Primorsk Krai, but in consultation with Warren, who, as I told you, said I was sticking my neck out but if I insisted, to go ahead. The resulting commendation from Dean Acheson was very gratifying.

Then Warren was transferred, as I recall, to Panama. He was succeeded by Ellis Briggs. This was Briggs's first Ambassadorial post. I remember the senior staff's astonishment. Bob Newbegin (who died not long ago) was the Counselor of Embassy, and he avoided comment, while looking somewhat baffled. The Political Officer was Harry Reed, and I remember him saying, “Do you realize this man has gone from the bottom of the Service to Ambassador in 19 years? This is unprecedented!” Well, Ellis came along, and he hadn't been in town for more than two weeks before he was being referred to locally by the Dominicans as “El Derocador” — the destroyer.

This was typical of what was going on in the Latin American area in the State Department at that time. There were the two schools of thought: either you snuggle up to the dictators and go along because we need them, or this is against all of our morals, position, rights, and so forth, and you should indicate your disapproval. Warren was of the first school, Briggs of the second school. Ellis made it very clear that he disapproved of the Benefactor de la Patria.

Q: This was Trujillo?

McCARGAR: Trujillo, with whom I had some occasional connections. He was a man of extraordinary energy. I remember going to an evening's entertainment at his finca just outside of town. At about 3 or 4 in the morning, some of the guests literally sneaked out, past the bushes, in order to be able to go home. The Jefe didn't like people to leave his parties. He insisted we all stay. There I was with my wife, my then-wife. We were stuck. Trujillo danced with my wife. She said he was a superb dancer — like many men of some bulk. This was in Warren's day, and Warren was used to this. He stayed. We were finally dismissed at about 5:30 in the morning. Warren had to stay with Trujillo until 8 o'clock.

The sons were not very impressive. But the daughter, Flor de Oro, was obviously the one of the children who had inherited her father's sagacity, his cruelty, his energy, and his brilliance. She had nine husbands, and was reported to have murdered the seventh, an American colonel. The story was that he was burned to death in bed. She was an extraordinary woman. She looked a little bit Negroid, and was a very, very attractive creature. Someone one had to be very careful about.

The one aspect of the Dominican Republic which I enjoyed — otherwise I didn't enjoy it, possibly because I was aware I was being punished — but the one aspect I did enjoy was that was being in charge of something called the Dominican Resettlement Association, DORSA. Just before the outbreak of war in Europe, there was a conference at Evian, in France, on what to do about the ever-increasing numbers of Jewish refugees from

the Nazis. Trujillo stole the day. Everyone else waffled. But Trujillo didn't hesitate. His delegate announced that Trujillo had instructed him that the Dominican Republic “will take all you want to send us.” Holding to this, the American-Jewish organizations in New York set up the Dominican Republic Resettlement Association. They managed to get, I believe, 300-500 refugees into the Dominican Republic. Trujillo gave them land on the north coast of the island at Sosua, which has since become one of the great resort areas of the Caribbean. Since there was American money involved here, one of my jobs was to look after this arrangement.

I spent all the weekends I could at Sosua. It lifted my spirits. The people were absolute delights. Their Saturday night gatherings were joyous and, I confess it, beckoningly European. Here they were, pharmacists, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants, professionals of all sorts, from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Romania — trying to till the soil on land that was just as bad as Massachusetts must have been when the Pilgrims got there. Boulders every two feet, or less, and they went at it with good will. It was an impressive, and endearing, performance.

The Jewish Home Agency in Palestine at that time had, as their equivalent of Minister of Agriculture, a man named David Stern, not to be confused with the Stern Gang. David Stern was a Russian Jew, and he and I, usually speaking Russian together, became great friends. He gave me a quadrilingual dictionary published in Russia in the middle of the 19th century, dedicated to the Empress Maria Aleksandrovna. He wrote a beautiful dedication to me, in Russian, on the flyleaf, which is still on my desk (though the decay of the paper is beginning to give me worries).

Through Stern I was accepted as a friend by the officers of DORSA and their Jewish-American organization backers in New York. Stern had some pronounced views on Jews in America, one of which I learned while accompanying him in a Manhattan taxi. We got into a cab at Grand Central in New York one day and, as you did in wartime, we shared the cab. A woman got in with us, and in the course of some conversation, something

about being Jewish came up. This woman made it perfectly clear that she was not Jewish. After she got out of the cab, Stern said, “If there's one goddam thing I can't stand, it is American-Jewish women who deny that they're Jews.” He was infuriated. His friendship meant a lot to me and remains one of my pleasing souvenirs.

Q: By the way, you mentioned you got married — because you'd been single when you were in the Soviet Union.

McCARGAR: No. I was not single, I was married but my wife of course was in America. I had married very young, just at the end of my university career. A marriage at 20 or 21 is not likely to last. We had a child at one point during the war, but she died ten days after. Doctors told me this was very common during the war. There was quite a loss of newborns. It wasn't that they were premature. They may have gone to term, but they had not developed in the end as they really should have so they didn't survive. My wife was with me in the Dominican Republic, but I think she discovered there that the life of a Foreign Service wife wasn't what she wanted for herself. A few years later, when I was in Budapest (she decided not to accompany me) we parted most amicably, and we remained friends thereafter.

Q: Could we talk about what the Dominican Republic was like under Trujillo as you saw it at that time, in 1943-44?

McCARGAR: To me it was a pitiful sight. (Mind you, it was Sumner Welles's favorite country — though he despised Trujillo — and one of my monthly tasks was to see that several cartons of his preferred Dominican cigarette were in the pouch to the Department.) The population was, I think, roughly a quarter of what it is today. The Dominicans are among the fastest growing people in the world. They simply reproduce. The population of the whole country was, I think, 1 million and something when I was there. It's now 4 and a half to 5 million today. They live very poorly. The bulk of the population was black, although Trujillo had passed a law saying that all Dominicans are of the white race.

That was the law. He also passed a law saying that the Dominican Republic was in the temperate zone, which even winter temperatures belied. The windows in Dominican houses (and in the Embassy), for example, had adjustable shutters but no glass. Cross-drafts were essential.

I was in Santo Domingo for few days some twenty years ago, or so, and what had happened there is, of course, happening everywhere today. The American Embassy, which was very well known, in 1944 was pleasantly situated on the western edge of the city. Today, the city has grown well past it, so that it is now near the center of town.

Trujillo ran such a corrupt regime. I remember he had an aide named Mora, whose first name I've forgotten. A tall, very handsome chap, with a great deal of charm. He took a rake-off on everything. On all the sugar that went out, he got so many dollars, or pennies, per bag, whatever it was, and it made him a very wealthy man. The Dominican playboy, Rubirosa, was very much in favor with Trujillo. The economy — sugar was the principal crop, but they also grew tobacco, coffee, cacao, and bananas, and exported hardwoods. That was about it, although there were hopes for bauxite while I was there, which I don't believe materialized.

Q:- I want to keep going back to how we saw it at that time. Was Trujillo's hand heavy? You just came out of the NKVD atmosphere, how did you find it?

McCARGAR: I had to laugh because it was the same thing. I remember sitting next to Trujillo's Beria at dinner one night -

Q: You mean the man in charge of the secret police?

McCARGAR: Yes. We knew this was the man who did the executions when they were necessary. He was impassive — but observant. Not a conversationalist. There was a more visible sign of Trujillo's domination. Up in the northwestern corner of the country, near the Haitian border, I can't remember the name of the city, there's a big hillside. In huge white

cement letters, reminiscent in size of the famous “Hollywood” in southern California, was spelled out, “Dios y Trujillo,” God and Trujillo. He had it changed to “Trujillo y Dios,” Trujillo and God. As I said, all this produced a certain ironic mirth in me to see the similarities between the tin-horn Caribbean dictator and the great master of the Russian Empire.

Q: It was during wartime. Did the war impact the country? Did we have bases there? Did we look to the Dominicans to support us, or was it just so inconsequential?

McCARGAR: All they were supposed to do was provide the necessary, the sugar and their export crops that we needed. But Trujillo made a big thing of his support of the United States and the Allies in the war, particularly when he saw, during Ellis Briggs's period there, that we were trying to undercut him — in a popular sense, obviously not by anything concrete. As a result of that he ordered a parade one day which was to demonstrate their gratitude to the Americans, to the great republic of the north. A big reviewing stand was erected and the entire Embassy, which wasn't that big, was to be there in the reviewing stand with Trujillo.

We had at that time, as everybody knows by now, so-called Legal Attach#s, who were FBI. They were J. Edgar Hoover's little victory over General Donovan and the OSS: the latter got the world, except for Latin America; Hoover got Latin America. Our FBI man was a very nice guy. He got information that somebody was going to throw a bomb during the parade, that somebody was going to assassinate Trujillo as the parade went by. The question then became: do members of the American Embassy sit in the reviewing stand or do they not? Well, we fussed and fussed with this. It was only on the morning of the great parade that the decision was made that we would be in the reviewing stand. This was based on some assurance that this FBI man had received that they weren't going to wipe out the American Embassy, that they could wipe out Trujillo without the rest of us. So we went and nothing happened.

In other words, there was, very far down underneath, active opposition to the old man. But they weren't in a position to do anything about it. He had the country in a very firm grip — thanks to fortunes such as those that Mora made, and thanks to the cold vigilance of his secret police chief.

Q: What was Ellis Briggs doing to get the name of "the destroyer"?

McCARGAR: He made it clear by his attitude and his public statements, without actually insulting Trujillo, that we believed in democracy and we didn't like corruption in governments. It was all very much indirect, but the point was clear. Trujillo was no dummy. He got the point and so did a good deal of the populace.

Q: You left there in 1944?

McCARGAR: I would not ordinarily have left in so short a time, but 1944 was the period when Cissie Patterson's campaign here in Washington against the Foreign Service came to a sort of climax.

Q: In the McCormick newspapers?

McCARGAR: Right. In her paper, the Times-Herald, here in Washington. One of the things she did was to publish a whole page, the back page of the first section of the paper, of nothing but pictures of Foreign Service Officers. The heading was "Draft Dodgers," and the text, such as it was made abundant reference to "cookie pushers," etc. The White House was disturbed at all this publicity. I don't think either FDR himself or Cordell Hull gave a damn about the Foreign Service, but there were high officials at the Department who did. So they struggled back and forth. Harry Hopkins was the chief proponent of the view that the publicity was bad for the President. It was only later, when Chip Bohlen got together with Hopkins that Hopkins's attitude changed towards the Foreign Service. But at

this time he was still basically hostile to the Service because he saw them all, or mostly, as conservative types opposed to FDR's policies and programs.

Q: And people like yourself who were not duly appreciative of the Soviet Union.

McCARGAR: That was certainly a point with Hopkins. It is, of course, ridiculous to posit some kind of agreed view between the Patterson-McCormick clan, their newspapers, and any part of FDR's White House. But, as the Soviets were so fond of saying, “objectively” that was the case. In the event, an agreement was reached between the White House and the State Department, to which Cordell Hull gave his assent, that the 25 youngest officers in the Foreign Service were to have their draft deferments lifted. None of us, of course, at the time, knew anything of the White House-State Department agreement on this. So when I got my draft notice, I immediately thought, “Oh, my god, they're still after me. This is Ward's report on me. Maybe even my report on the Soviet Far East.” Not at all.

My good friend Walter Stoessel, who was serving in Colombia, was also among the youngest. He, incidentally, was taken some time before I was. He came and spent the night in Ciudad Trujillo with us. He wanted to hear all about Russia, the Soviet Union and so forth. “What was it like?” he asked. So I told him all about the Soviet Union. We had long, long conversations. In the end, I said “Walter, the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States are going to dominate our foreign affairs for the rest of this century”.

He was very much taken with that. That's why, when he had the chance, he went to the Navy's language school at Boulder, Colorado, and learned Russian. Sure enough, his first assignment after the war, when he came back to the Service, as we all did in 1946, was to Moscow. He went on from there, and was always very appreciative. He always said “You're the one who encouraged me, and got me into this thing”. Later on he may not have quite as happy about it.

Q: What did you do in the military?

McCARGAR: Well, I went up to Washington (with Tap Bennett, incidentally, who was in Santo Domingo as a Foreign Service Auxiliary then, but twenty years later, of course, became Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, and called in the Marines). There, Avra Warren, who was still Ambassador when I got word that my deferment would be lifted, very kindly took me into see the Chief of Naval Intelligence (advising me all the way as to how these matters were actually handled). We were received first by one of those Marine sergeants who are such marvelous characters. This guy was physically almost a perfect square, a real, solid Marine. As he took us to see the Admiral he said, “You were over in Haiti, in Cape Haitien?” Warren said, “Yes, we made a trip over there and we went up to the Citadel.” The Marine said, “At the citadel, at Henri Christophe's grave, that little white picket fence around it, is that still there?” We said “Yes, yes, it is.” “I'm so glad,” he said, “because I had that done. I thought”, he said, “it was a disgrace that there was no marker where their great man was buried.”

Q: Of course the Marines occupied the place for 13 years or longer.

McCARGAR: Longer. I think that was the longest occupation of any of our Caribbean or Central American adventures.

In any event, the result of our talk with the Admiral was that, when I did go into the Navy, I was sworn in as a Naval officer by our Naval Attach# in Santo Domingo (my next-door neighbor). My first orders already referred to me as an Intelligence officer. I was assigned immediately to the Naval Officers' Training School at Princeton. I got there and there was an overflow. They couldn't handle us all. So several hundred of us were put on a train, but we didn't know where we were going. Finally, word seeped through that we were going to New York, or near New York. We went to Fort Schuyler in the Bronx, which was a Merchant Marine School originally. Riding up in the train, there were no seats, we were all standing. The chap next to me and I got to talking. I ventured the hope to him that if we were going to be near Manhattan, “Perhaps we can get tickets to 'Oklahoma'” — then the

hit musical of the day. I said I hadn't been able to get any tickets so far. He looked at me helpfully, and said, “Have you tried the bus?” I realized you had to be a little bit careful.

Q: I think a lot us learned that during the war.

McCARGAR: I went to school. I got down to Washington. I reported to ONI.

Q: To the Office of Naval Intelligence.

McCARGAR: Right. I reported there and the yeoman who took my papers seemed baffled. I said “Is something wrong? Am I not supposed to be here?” He said “Hell, you're not even supposed to be in the Navy.” I said, “Well, if it's all right with you, I'll just turn around and walk out.” He said “I wouldn't advise that.”

The head of the Russian part of ONI at that time was Major Andrew Wylie. A Marine major, he was very much a Washington fixture. The Wylies were apparently a Washington family of antiquity and distinction. Wylie was very nice to me. I very much wanted to be assigned to the OSS and to go with one of their missions going into Eastern Europe. Prague was coming up at that time. I think, Budapest was due after that. Bucharest was the first one — as you know, that comes later in the story.

Curiously enough Admiral Standley, my Ambassador while in the Soviet Union, was on the Advisory Board of the OSS at that time. Lunching one day at the Army-Navy Officers' Club here in town, he was also there. I went over and greeted him, and paid my respects. Then I said, “Admiral, as you see by my one stripe, I'm in the Navy now. I really would like to be assigned to the OSS and go into Eastern Europe. I'd be grateful for any help you might give.” He said, with interest and affably, “Yes, yes, I'll do what I can.” (The heads of the Russian Section of OSS Research and Analysis, who had seen my Primorsk Krai report, and had me brief their staff when I returned the year before from the Soviet Union, had in fact already made an official request to the Navy for my assignment — which I would

have taken if it came along, in the hopes I could move over from there to one of the East European missions.)

The next thing that happened was that some Captain in the ONI called me in and said, “McCargar, you'll get your orders in a day or two to the Aleutian Islands.” I think I pulled that famous line that destroys you, something like “Captain, you can't do this to me.” Well, they did it to me. First I went to Adak, Headquarters of the Seventeenth Naval District (this being American territory), and of what I think was called the Eleventh Fleet. I was given a couple of weeks with the Intelligence unit there for training. The District and the Fleet were under the command of the same man, an Admiral, I think named Smith. The Eleventh Fleet was a joke. It consisted of four of the oldest four-stack cruisers in the United States Navy. They'd tried carriers in the Bering Sea at one point, but on those pitching decks, even in so-called good weather, nobody could land on them and nobody could take off. The whole time that I was up there, we lost a ship or a plane a week to the winter. It was a costly enterprise.

Our commanding Admiral was vastly disliked in the Navy. One of the things that endeared him to his command was flying in a cow so that he could have fresh milk everyday. Things like that. The sailors knew about it. It didn't sit well. I never saw our Admiral. But, encouraged by the other watch officers, I woke him up one night, deliberately, with some asinine message. He wasn't very happy about that.

Then I was moved to my original destination, Akutan, which you could only reach by ship from Dutch Harbor. It was an old whalers' coaling station, about 75 miles east of Dutch Harbor, the next island over. The station had been taken over by the Navy and we checked the Russian merchant ships going to the West Coast for Lend-Lease materials and supplies. We also purported to fuel the Russian ships when necessary, but it was a risky process. The winds at Akutan would howl twelve months a year, running straight the length of the bay. They were so strong that all our shore structures were held down by

thick cables sunk into the ground. Even so, I saw the main enlisted men's quarters move about seven feet to the east one morning.

The Navy, and presumably the Russians, finally decided it was too rough and too risky. We moved our entire operation over to Dutch Harbor which was a bit more civilized. There were 3,000 officers and men on the base and I was designated the Foreign Liaison Officer. I was under direct command of the Intelligence Unit, which was in the Captain's Office, and was directly responsible to the Intelligence Unit at Adak Headquarters. Nobody on the Dutch Harbor base (the Captain excepted, of course) could interfere with what I did. I was my own boss.

I had a patrol boat with a crew of three. They would take me out to the Harbor, and wait while I boarded the Russian ships. Many were empty Liberty ships on their way to the West Coast. If you've ever been alongside an empty Liberty ship it looks like the damn Empire State Building, with only this feeble little rope ladder dangling part way down the hull. (In Aleutian waters the rule of thumb is if you fall in it's best if you're fished out within three minutes.) Those ladders were a challenge. Among other things, the crosspieces, usually well-worn wood, had a disconcerting habit of detaching and falling into the water below when you stepped on them. You quickly learn the tricks, or else. You have to do it just right because the waters are never calm. You stand on the stern of the picket boat. When the stern rises, you leap up onto the ladder. Don't ever try it when you're on the down move of the stern. You're bound to miss. Get it on the up. When you come back down, again you have to get it on the up. Once on the ladder, do NOT hold it by the steps, only by the side ropes (so that when the step gives way you still have something to hold onto). I managed it; in a year or more, I didn't fall off.

My job was to clear the ship into American waters, provide any assistance needed (we repaired and refloated two ships that went aground) and refuel, if needed. But my objective was to get as much information as I could from the captains. I don't know how I survived that year, there because each captain had a different drink — consumption of which was

a must. Most of it is what the Russians called samosdelaniy, meaning self-made. It was pure alcohol with a sprig of something in it. Each one had a different formula. There was a very famous woman captain, Anna Shchetinina, who'd gotten a lot of publicity in the United States. She was the only woman merchant captain in the world at that time, I think. She ran a taut ship, but she had the worst samosdelaniy of them all. I'd sit there going through the Russian ritual, “Do odna!” (”Bottoms up, bottoms up.”)

I evolved a technique of listening to all that was going on. Then, with all this drinking, I would ask to go to the head. I'd go to the head, get in there, and quickly scribble down one to half-a-dozen words, a kind of outline, or list of key words, of what I'd been hearing. I'd go back ashore, and with that bit of help I could write my report. I thought I had absolutely conquered the world when, in August of 1945, Russian ships started coming in unusual numbers. Until mid-August we had about 15 ships in harbor. They all said they didn't know anything special. They were, of course, all lying through their teeth. I got one captain who said that he'd received a message, “We are at war with Japan. Proceed to the nearest friendly port.”

He didn't actually give me the message. A lot of captains would just dump a lot of paper on me, charts and instructions, which sometimes were quite useful. We'd find charts the U. S. Navy didn't have. But my latest captain's report I cabled right back to Washington immediately. I had almost gone to bed when a messenger came and said the captain of such and such a ship (it happened to be at dock) wants to see you. So I went back aboard. The political commissar had obviously gotten hold of the poor captain. Very nervous, he said, “What I told you before is not true. There's no such message. I was just talking off the top of my head.” So what could I do? I had to report that back. So I did. I wrote, “Captain now denies the existence of any such message.” The next morning, of course, even commercial radio reported, “The Soviets have entered the Pacific war.”

Their conquest of Manchuria has been fully reported. But their invasion of the Kuril Islands, has been given little attention. Originally divided between Japan and Russian in the 18th

century, the Russians exchanged their northern part of the chain to the Japanese in 1875 in exchange for Northern Sakhalin. One of the Soviet aims in the Far East was to capture the entire Kurils chain, and the southern, Japanese half of Sakhalin. They began with an attack on Paramushiro, the northernmost Kuril island, 7 miles across the strait from the tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Their losses were dreadful.

I talked to captains who were involved in the operation. It was the usual Russian tactics. That is to say, they sailed down from Petropavlovsk in Liberty ships, the decks filled with soldiers. Then they just ferried them to shore. The Japanese had tanks. Paramushiro was heavily fortified. The first wave of Russians was wiped out. Then came another wave, and that was wiped out. And so on, until they simply overwhelmed the Japanese by sheer numbers. People who were with the Red Army in Germany and in Europe told me of these Russian tactics. There were these waves, wave after wave after wave of men slaughtered. Throw in some more, throw in some more.

I was also aide to a Soviet Admiral — who was stationed at Cold Bay, which is actually on the Alaska Peninsula — when he was in our Unalaska Sector. We trained 15,000 Soviet officers and men there, and transferred 150 ships to the Soviet Navy — nothing larger than a frigate. Frigates at that time were much smaller ships than they are today. When Admiral Popov arrived, on a merchant ship, in early spring 1945, I went out to greet him at Dutch Harbor before we sent him over to Cold Bay. We became quite friendly. Finally he said to me one day, “You don't remember my wife, do you?” I said that, regrettably, I did not. His wife, he told me, was the Manager of the Chelyuskin Hotel in Vladivostok. He said, “I know all about you,” and I said, “I'll bet you do.” The only other reference to my Vladivostok days from the more than 300 Russian captains whom I saw in Aleutian waters was from a merchant captain with the odd name of Amerikantsev (it appears there is an entire village near the White Sea with families bearing this unusual name), with whom I became on particularly good terms. Once, on parting, he said to me, with no preface, “She is all right. Just don't ever try to get in touch with her.”

We also gave the Russians four icebreakers — which had been built in San Diego! Northwind, Southwind, Eastwind, and Westwind. They were extremely powerful machines. I thought they were quite beautiful. The first one that came into Dutch Harbor — I think it was the Northwind — was captained by a skipper whom I'd known on another ship. We had become very good friends. It appeared, however, that in Seattle he had pressed the wrong button. Everything was done by buttons on those ships. He pressed the wrong button and this great machine climbed up out of the Bay, over the dock, and ran into a brewery across the street.

The Russian Admiral commanding down in Washington was furious over this. He sent a really stinky message — in English — which I had to deliver to the Captain of the brand new ship when he came in. I gave it to the Captain, kind of laughing, and said “Now you're really in trouble.” He was furious. He said “It's all a lie. It's not true.” Curiously enough, the Russians had an odd complaint about these ships, which I understand really performed magnificently...

Q: Let me stop for just one second.

Q: You were saying they had one complaint about these icebreakers.

McCARGAR: One complaint. They said “It's all metal, it's all steel, there's no wood.” The Russians are accustomed to the interiors of their ships being lined in wood. For example, at the time of the United Nations Charter Conference in San Francisco, they brought through a ship called the “Dalstroi” which was the pride of their Pacific fleet. They had about 300 ships in the Pacific at the end of the war, most of them given by us. I was shown around the ship by the captain of the “Dalstroi.” (The ship's name was that of the NKVD company that managed the Kolyma River Valley concentration camps — some of the worst, with exceptionally high mortality rates — and all the Far Eastern projects, most of them based on forced labor, that belonged to the Ministry of the Interior.) Though not very large, the ship was beautifully outfitted. The captain told me very, very proudly that

they were going to San Francisco to provide the residence for Molotov and the Soviet Delegation at the United Nations Conference. I guess they didn't want to stay in an American hotel.

My final embarrassment at Dutch Harbor concerned the largest Russian ship in the Pacific, the “Balkhash,” named after the great lake in Kazakhstan. It was a 15,000 ton ship, which was large for those days. It was carrying a load of prisoners. That is to say, the American Army in France had picked up the so-called Turkoman Regiments that the German Army had conscripted from their Red Army prisoners from Central Asia. They were really kind of labor battalions. These prisoners were then shipped across the Atlantic, across the United States, and put on Russian ships on the West Coast to be returned to the Soviet Union.

I remember going on board and the captain telling me this was what he was carrying. He said, “I'll show you one of these guys.” This boy was brought up from below, and he couldn't have been more than 18 or 19. He'd served in the Red Army, was captured, and was put into the German Army. He was sent to the Afrika Korp, where he was captured by the British, who sent him up through Iran and back into the Soviet Union. There he was put back in the Red Army and sent to the front. Again he was captured by the Germans, who sent him to one of the Turkoman Regiments in France. There the Americans captured him. This young boy, straight out of Central Asia, had served in practically every major army in the Second World War. He was a very handsome boy. We exchanged a few words and the captain sent him back. I said, “What are his chances of living?” The captain said, “Zero. Those people are all alike.” They were all executed as soon as they got back. You had to prove that you had been unconscious on the field of battle; that was the only way you could legitimately be taken prisoner. Otherwise you were subject to execution, according to the rules of the Red Army.

When the captain called for some refreshments, the stewardess who answered his call turned out to be one of the waitresses we'd known in Vladivostok days at the Chelyuskin Hotel. We had a great reunion. Then the “Balkhash” sailed on to the west. As it went

through La Perouse Strait, it was torpedoed and sunk. This was near the end of the war when there were no Japanese submarines left. I was told by a captain coming through that they had lost the “Balkhash” in La Perouse Strait (in almost the same place, incidentally, where that Korean airliner was shot down by the Soviets years later.) I was told that the “Balkhash” was torpedoed even though the big Soviet flags painted on the hull were brilliantly lit.

So I reported to Washington in a cable that one of our submarines had sunk the “Balkhash.” Almost instantly I got a rocket back saying, “Justify your report.” I just said that I had been reporting the common understanding of members of the Soviet merchant marine. When I got back to Washington sometime later, I asked Ed Seidel, then head of the Russian desk of ONI, “What did you send me that blast for?” He said “Of course we sank it, but you didn't think we were going to admit it, did you?”

While I was in the Aleutians, I received occasional communications, friendly and encouraging, from the Chief of Personnel at State, Penn Davis (Nathaniel P. Davis). A wonderful man. (I learned much later, when the new Foreign Service Act allowed us to see our Personnel files, that Penn Davis had looked at my file, and read the Primorsk Krai report that I had sent in from Ciudad Trujillo. He wrote an appreciation of that report, and of myself, that was a forceful refutation of everything Angus Ward had written about me.) While in the Navy I received two Foreign Service promotions: a Departmental sense of guilt about the agreement with the White House about it junior officers? Maybe. But doubtful. A result of Penn Davis's written intervention in my file? How is one to know? Simple bureaucratic numerology in advance of a new Foreign Service Act? In any event I ended, finally, after a hectic four years and something, with a numerical rank (6) in the new Foreign Service, instead of one in the various “Unclassifieds” that marked entry and early progress up in the old Service.

In September 1945 I wrote to both Chip Bohlen and Penn Davis, and said, “The war is over, and I am ready and anxious to return to the Foreign Service.” It took me until

December to get back to get back to the United States (that is, to what is even now referred to as the “lower 48”). Then there were the mechanics and the bureaucracy to be overcome. In early 1946 I was assigned simultaneously somewhere in the State Department and to ONI. I had two offices. So in both cases, when I would leave, I'd say, “I'm in the other office.” With that I took off and went down to Florida for about three weeks. No one noticed. Eventually, in March, I was discharged from the Navy and my military leave from the Foreign Service terminated. Very shortly thereafter, I was assigned to Budapest where they needed a Russian-speaking officer.

Q: So you served in Budapest from 1946 to 1947?

McCARGAR: Yes, from April '46 to December '47. I'd had to help myself to get that assignment. For one thing, one of my Stanford mates, Leslie Squires, who died a few years ago, was stationed in Budapest. I saw him in Washington and he told me that a Russian-speaking officer would be a great help, and that he would suggest my name to the Minister. Budapest was still a Legation. Just in passing, Squires mentioned something about the Pond. All I understood was that it was some kind of a secret operation. I didn't get any further into it at that time. Also I went to Loy Henderson, who then had command of all of Eastern Europe. I said I would like to go to Hungary. He said he would speak to Durbrow, which he did, and to Wally Barbour, who had charge of Hungarian affairs. I had a good interview with Barbour, who approved my assignment. So all was in order.

But before I could pay a call on Durbrow, I bumped into Walter Stoessel in the hallways of the old State building. Transportation across the Atlantic at that time was somewhat problematic. Walter said, “If you're trying to get a plane over, I'm going with Bedell Smith. General Smith is going to be Ambassador in Moscow. I'm going on his plane with him, and you could get on, there's room. You could get off at Paris and go on from there.” I said “Terrific!”. Next thing I knew I was summoned to Durbrow's office. He kept me standing, while he leaned back in his chair. He then launched into an absolutely violent diatribe. “Who do you think you are? Trying to wangle your way onto the Ambassador's plane,” and

so on. All I could say was, “It's nothing of the sort. I was offered this place by somebody who's going to be on the plane on the grounds that there was space. If there is no space, there's no problem.” Actually he behaved so badly that Dick Davies, who was in Durbrow's outer office — there are two Dick Davies. This is not the one who was Ambassador later. This is the one who died.

Q: Is this the one who was killed in Cyprus or the Polish Dick Davies?

McCARGAR: No. It's not the Polish one, I know him, it's the other one. Tall, handsome guy. Actually I'd known him slightly. We frequently lunched together after I came back from Russia. He'd say “Oh, I'm going to have lunch with Helen Ward. Come and have lunch with me”. Helen Ward was Benny Goodman's singer at that time. What's this handsome diplomat doing with Benny Goodman's singer? This was a world I didn't know anything about. In any event, Dick was so embarrassed by Durbrow's carryings-on, that he came out, came down the stairs with me and said, “I apologize for Durbrow, but he gets like this sometimes, and it doesn't really mean anything.” But that was Durbrow, of whom I saw a good deal, always rather awkwardly (on his part), in later years. I got transportation somehow and across the Atlantic to Paris, where my DORSA friends introduced me to the mess they were running for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. I felt somehow unworthy in their presence. Then I went on to Budapest.

Right off, the first thing, was one fight after another with the Russians. For starters they were trying to take our houses away under the guise of their need to billet officers for conferences, etc. I learned quickly that our basic technique was not working. When these local hassles would come up we'd usually turn to the Moscow Embassy for help. We did this in one case, early on, and Moscow Embassy came back and said, “Look, we're just swamped with this kind of thing. We can't handle it. You've got to handle these things there, locally, by yourselves.” This was a very good lesson for me.

I hadn't been there but a few months, two or so, when Squires was transferred. At this point he explained to me that he was the Pond officer in Budapest. The Pond, as I later found out more about it, was a secret operation that had been in existence for some time.

According to testimony given to a Congressional committee in 1947, General Marshall, at the beginning of '42, had ordered General Hayes Kroner, the Deputy Director of Military Intelligence, Deputy G2, to create a self-standing, permanent secret intelligence operation for the Army. Kroner turned the project over to a Colonel John Grombach, known to a lot of people as “Frenchy.” Grombach ran it during the war by means of one Foreign Service Officer in each Embassy who had the authority to carry on the operation in his area. He didn't have to ask the Chief of Mission. He had secret funds and he had secret communications. That is to say, he enciphered his own communications, which were then given to the Embassy or Legation code room,, where it was enciphered again. When it got to State, it was decoded, at which point they found a message that was still encoded, and had a signal word at the beginning. The message was then sent to the liaison with Grombach at State, a man in my time named Jack Neal, who distributed it on to those who could do the final decoding. I understood that it was a very useful operation during the Second World War. The question from Squires was, “Would I accept to be the man in Budapest?” “Yes, yes. I'd be delighted.” The transfer was approved in Washington, so there I was. In the Legation only the Minister knew of my additional work — though we never spoke about it.

From Squires I inherited a network. I looked at it and I found it to be, in my judgement, too much to the right. There was a lot of the aristocracy (most of whom were delightful people) but there was no labor, no trade union, no socialists, no peasant connections, not even any small business. So I embarked on trying to enlarge the network, which I was able to do in the autumn of '46, when the Paris Peace Conference got underway. Freddie Merrill, who was Chief of the Political Section, left to join the U. S. Delegation at the Paris Conference, and at its end went straight on to the Department. So I was also assigned

the job of Chief of the Political Section. It was certainly one of the most fascinating and satisfying periods of my life, those almost 2 years.

Q: Before we get to the Political Section and what went on, what sort of a post did we have there? Who was running it, and what was the political situation within the country?

McCARGAR: Arthur Schoenfeld was the Minister.

Q: It was a Legation at that time?

McCARGAR: It was a Legation. The three defeated Axis countries, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, each had Legations. I think after a few years those were the last three Legations the United States had left. Of course, you had in each of those three countries an Allied Control Commission. The Chairman of the Commission in those three countries was the Russian officer commanding — the Soviets being in each case the Occupying Power. In the case of Hungary, the Russian commander was Marshal Voroshilov.. It was his show, and he ran it. He had a Deputy, General Sviridov. As time went on Voroshilov spent less and less time in Hungary, and it was Sviridov who ran the show — but always in the name of the Marshal, whom he would claim in most cases he had consulted. The American and British representatives on the Allied Control Commission had absolutely no authority whatsoever. They were not allowed to communicate directly with the Hungarian Government. Everything had to go through the Chairman of the Commission.

Of course, we at the Legation were accredited to the Hungarian Government, so we communicated directly with them. The British were in the identical position (and the French were present in a minor capacity). But our diplomatic capacity to communicate didn't mean all that much, because if we made an inquiry of, say, the Ministry of Commerce, the Russians knew about this instantly, and they gave orders that the communication was not to be answered.

After the Hungarian elections, both Budapest and national, which had been held in the autumn of 1945, before I got there, (the only free elections ever held in the Soviet Empire) the Smallholders Party, which had a distinguished resistance record during the German occupation, held a 57 percent majority. This had been achieved contrary to the Russian wishes for a unified electoral slate, in which the Communist Party would have had a much larger role than the elections finally gave them.

We had a great advantage in our dealings with the Government — apart from the desire shared by everyone except the Communists that Hungary not be transformed into a Communist state. Or even, fear of fears, a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. That advantage was the Prime Minister, Ferenc Nagy. We had two connections to Nagy which were very useful. One was our Economic Counselor, Laszlo Ecker-Racz, who was from the United States Treasury. Hungarian born, a U.S. citizen, Ecker-Racz had risen fairly high in the Treasury bureaucracy. He and Nagy became very close, good friends. In addition we had the assistance of a man named Francis Deak. Also Hungarian born, Francis had been a professor of international law at Columbia before the war. He had then joined the Pond (so I was in constant contact with him). After the war, Deak, not yet a Foreign Service Officer, was made Civil Air Attach# to every country in Europe and in the Middle East, working out of Bern. He was on the go all the time. (I got my secret Pond funds from him, mostly in Swiss francs.) Deak's mother, half-brother, and half-sister were all living in Budapest when I was there, so his visits were quite frequent, and he was on very good terms with Prime Minister Nagy. Whenever he called on Nagy he would take me along, as Political Officer of the Legation. I didn't understand what the two were saying, but it established a contact for me with the Prime Minister — which over the years developed into a close and lasting friendship.

The advantage of these two American staff members was that the Prime Minister had two long-term projects in mind for the future of Hungary. One was his realization that Budapest could be, indeed, should be, a hub for air transport in Europe. Deak would come into town,

and civil aviation was something that was regularly on Nagy's mind, so the two would try to work out ways to make Nagy's dream of Budapest as an air transport hub for Europe a reality. Nagy's other long-term aim was to use the Danube River as a means of economic, and then political, cooperation among the riparian states. In short, our Civil Air Attach# and our Economic Counselor were very useful to him.

Besides the Political Section and the Economic Section, we had a Public Affairs Section. The first man to handle that left shortly after I got there. His place was taken by a man named Lewis Revey. Revey, while born in the United States, had Hungarian parents, and his Hungarian was absolutely fluent. He was a brilliant man. I privately thought him the best man on the staff. Oddly enough, the Public Affairs office was in a building in Szabadsag Ter (Freedom Square), near the Parliament, which is today the entire American Embassy. We bought the building. All the other staff, from the Minister on down, were in what was called the PK building, on the same Square. The PK building had a bank on the ground floor (which was the site of pandemonium as the great Hungarian inflation took hold — the fastest and farthest up to that time, and intended by the Communists and the Russians to wipe out the middle class, which it did). Our offices were on the fourth floor, sandwiched between the Ministry of Industry (headed by a pro-Soviet Socialist) on top of us), and I've forgotten what was underneath. But to give you an idea what all this meant, when I left in December '47, rather hurriedly, they did a survey. I had a very small office with a private door into the Minister's office. He'd lean his head in and say, “Jim, do this,” and I'd come with a draft of a telegram or whatever was required. The thing about this office was its size.

Q: We're speaking of a room about 12 by 10.

McCARGAR: They found nine microphones in the walls in that one little place. I had a leg man, who was also the President to the Hungarian Parliamentary Correspondents' Association. This man fascinated me. He was no higher than — he looked like 4 feet, but I guess he was 5-and-a-half or something. He was a very proud man. I learned later he was

a member of the Social Democratic Party — and he had covered the Battle of Warsaw in 1920. This really fascinated me. I'd say “Mr. Deri (we were on very formal terms), tell me about the battle of Warsaw,” and he would bring it to life for me. Deri would drop by my office in the morning and we'd talk about the political situation. He would then go to the Parliament and spend day there. Then, between 5 and 6 in the afternoon, he would come back to my office with a written report of what had gone on during the day.

The morning meeting would also include whatever had transpired during the night because a lot did go on at the night. For example, the arrest of the Secretary General of the Smallholders Party by Russians troops took place about 11 o'clock at night. Deri was invaluable to me. It wouldn't have been possible to do the job without him. I could have done my secret job without him but I couldn't have done the open, political job without him. I would have had no idea of hat was going on in the Parliament, which was the vital, political arena. (In later years that arena was reduced to the secret meetings of the Politburo or the Central Committee of the Party.)

Through one of my secret Pond sources I would get transcripts of Cabinet meetings. I would send them back to Washington because I didn't dare show them to anyone else. I would send them back and they would be translated here in Washington. So everyone concerned in Washington had a pretty good idea of what was going on in Budapest. Then things began to change.

The Communists, beating the drums of an “anti-democratic conspiracy,” dreamed up out of whole cloth, extended it to Prime Minister Nagy, and got him to resign while on vacation in Switzerland by the simple device of holding his smallest child, young Laci, then four years old, and back in Budapest, and saying, “You give us your resignation and we will give you your child.” The transfer took place at Buchs, on the Swiss-Liechtenstein border. That having been done, the Government, now dominated by Matyas Rakosi, head of the Communist Party, as Vice Premier, announced elections for August 1947. This was the one where they really made up for the error of those 1945 free elections. They had a

meeting in Poland where Laszlo Rajk, then the Communist Interior Minister, and Jozsef Revai, the ideologue of the Party, met with Soviet and other Communist leaders, and were instructed on how to falsify an election. They had, for example, something like 250,000 of what they called blue cards, which were the equivalent of am absentee ballot. These were handed out to Party workers, who could then, and did, go all over the country voting again and again.

In the course of the run-up to that election, the Communist refined a new tactic. Accusations would be made that some opponent of the Communists was a “conspirator,” a “fascist.” This would be followed by a motion to lift the person's Parliamentary immunity. When the motion was made, there were always two or three or days between the motion and its passage. It was those two or three days that gave these people their chance to escape. Meanwhile more and more politicians were coming to us saying, “What will the United States do to help us?”

I was even called one day by the Jesuit Father Janossy. In Hungary about 60-65 percent of the population are Catholic. The Primate of the Catholic Church in Hungary, the Archbishop of Esztergom, usually also a Cardinal, has a very important role to play. Cardinal Mindszenty, whom I didn't like at all, and I'll tell you why in a bit, had one point of view. He had behaved very courageously under the Germans, which is why he had been made a Cardinal. But he was very confrontational with the Russians.

But at the same time, there was a group inside the Church, led by Jesuits who believed that they could create what they called “a Christian society in a Communist state.” (Curiously, much of the impetus for this came from the Spanish Jesuits.) Father Janossy, who was the leader of this group, asked me to meet with them. They took me to one of their retreats up in Buda, where they explained all this to me and asked what could I do for them. I said this was very interesting but it was not within the possibilities of a Government one of whose basic principles was separation of Church and State.

The fact of the matter was that U. S. policy eschewed support for any political parties in Eastern Europe. American policy in Eastern Europe had been summarized by no less than Secretary of State Marshall himself in a 1947 conversation in the Department with the Romanian Minister. “This Government,” said the Secretary, “had no intention of dictating to the Romanian or any other people how they should conduct their elections, or of intervening in favor of one party or the other.” (This was, of course, diplomatic verbiage of a well-understood sort. The difficulty was that its virtuous strophes were, in fact, really the policy in Eastern Europe, as we residing there were recognizing more and more. The claimed policy was, of course, dependent on the distribution of power. Thus, it was not uniformly applicable — for example, not in Italy, as we shall see below).

Father Istvan Balogh was an Under Secretary of State in the Prime Minister's office. A very portly priest, he was a political genius (which was why he was in the Prime Minister's office, even after Ferenc Nagy's departure). He called me one day, gave me a very good lunch at his house, and said “I'm going to start a new newspaper. There will be a new party and new newspaper. But newsprint is my problem, is what I need. I'm willing to pay for it. If you can get it for me from Germany I'll pay for it.” I knew what my ultimate answer had to be, but out of curiosity I asked, “How do you propose to pay for this?” By way of reply, Balogh said, “If you'll look at that little painting on the table.” In a standing frame he had, I think it was a Picasso on one side, and a Monet on the other, something for which he could have gotten a great deal of money. I had to turn him down, but I did say, “Father, if at any point, you want to leave, let me know. I will see that you are saved.” He never asked for my help on that. I may illustrate Balogh's political skill by reference to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Balogh had retired from public life — no doubt under threats — at the end of 1947, and remained in retirement. But in early November, 1956, before the second Russian attack on Budapest, an exiled Hungarian politician said to me, “Frankly, I do not see any real future for this Revolution. “Why?” I asked. “Because I do not see Father Balogh anywhere on the scene.”

What these incidents illustrate is that my original Pond intelligence operation, by sheer force of circumstance, had been transformed into a political operation — in which I really had only one card to play — a card I shall explain a bit further along.

In June Arthur Schoenfeld retired. His place was taken by Selden Chapin, who, after drafting the Foreign Service Act of 1946, had just completed his term as the first Director General of the Foreign Service. I went from Budapest to London to pick him up. (We still had an Air Corps C-47, with a pilot, thanks to the continued existence of the Military Mission.) We had a very interesting dinner at Claridge's. Selden and Mary were of course there, plus Jerry Drew, who was going to be Selden's Counselor, and David Rockefeller, a family friend. Chapin had his heart set on getting off the plane at Budapest and delivering a speech in Hungarian. He already had a phonetic version, so that he could pronounce it reasonably correctly. Everyone at table was very enthusiastic about this. But when it came my turn, I said, “It's impossible. It can't be done. First of all there is going to be no crowd there. The airport is under the control of the Russians and that's all that you'll see — a few Russians with their guns and that's it.”

“Well, can't we do it when we down to the town?” was the rejoinder. I said “I do advise against it. It's a gesture that will not succeed. If circumstances were different, of course, it would be the standard thing to do. But this is a special situation”. As we flew back to Hungary, I thought to myself, I've just talked myself out of my job. But on the contrary, I overheard Selden and Jerry talking, and they said that they wanted to keep me because I was the only one who could stand up and say what I thought — which I was naturally very pleased about.

At the airport, it took us an hour to get off the airfield, before the Russian sentries would let us out. There I was yelling in Russian to sentries who wouldn't budge, or call a senior officer. They did it deliberately, just so that the new American Minister would understand who was running the show.

Q: - I'd like to get an attitudinal reading here. The Germans had been defeated two years before. How did you and, say, the people in the Embassy view the situation — were the Soviets going to be our enemy, was this pretty clear to us? Or was this a rough patch; we'll weather through it, and things may work out. What was the feeling?

McCARGAR: By the time I got there, there was no question whatsoever that this was going to be a contest, a real confrontation between us. Our spirits kept going down and down, because we saw that the Russians were getting away with what they wanted to do which was to take over Hungary entirely. The reports we got from Bulgaria — witness the execution of Petkov there — what was going on in Romania. It was perfectly clear what the story was. All of us believed that the Yalta Declaration, had it been observed, was a perfectly legitimate solution. It was not, as the French (piqued at their exclusion from Yalta) have repeatedly claimed all these years, that we and the Russians divided the world between us at Yalta. That is not what the Declaration said or implied. Actually, even Churchill's famous percentage offer at Moscow, which Stalin initialed, did not give the Russians control of Hungary, by any means. In fact, I think the British in that suggestion had a larger share in Hungary than the Russians. The British had very close connections with the Hungarians. There was a whole section of Hungarian society which was either socially or commercially connected to Britain. They were great admirers of the British political system, the aristocracy and so on.

There was no doubt in our minds, as I said. As events wore on, we became more and more depressed — until the day when President Truman came out with what became known as the Truman Doctrine (an extrapolation from the wording of his announcement of aid for Greece and Turkey, vice the British, who could no longer afford it). We all went out into the streets of Budapest that morning with our heads held high. I can't tell you the effect that it had on the entire staff of the Legation. It was astounding. Of course the President's announcement didn't say we were going to contest the Russians in Hungary — I've forgotten what the exact wording was — but anyway it laid the basis for possible

solutions to some of our problems. It made it quite clear that we were going to back up democratic forces as much as we could anywhere around the world.

Q: When you were wearing your intelligence hat, had the intelligence switched from what the Germans were doing, which obviously had been the wartime focus for the Pond, completely to what the Soviets were up to?

McCARGAR: It was both the Hungarians and the Soviets. Washington wanted to know, for example, and this is very important, which Hungarians were actually opposing the Russians, and which were going along with them. So it was the Hungarian and the Russian targets that we were aiming at. Which brings me to my one card to play, that I mentioned above.

In June 1947 I was called back to Washington for consultation. The real reason was that those running the Pond wanted to see me. I met Grombach and several of his Colonels. At a lunch of just the two of us Grombach said something cautionary to me about women. By that time I was divorced from my wife. What Grombach was really trying to say was the any Hungarian woman with whom I became involved could quite possibly be a Russian agent. Obviously Grombach had somebody there in Budapest watching me. I don't know who it was, nor what the connection could have been, but someone was watching me — though they weren't very well informed. I indeed had a Hungarian girlfriend at that time (whose chances of being a Russian agent were more than slim), but I was in the process of switching my relationship to the wife of one of my British colleagues. I said “I understand what you're talking about. But it's perfectly all right. There's one thing you don't know. There is a Hungarian lady, but this is a cover. My intention is to marry an Englishwoman,” — which I in fact did the next year with the Department's permission. “Oh,” he said, “all right.” Apparently I passed, because a few days later, in the bar of the Plaza Hotel in New York, I was presented to General Kroner, who was obviously still the senior statesman of the Pond.

While I was on that trip I went in to see Chip Bohlen, then Counselor of the Department. I told him what I thought was happening in Hungary. I said “It's like a field of hay. Anything that gets above a certain level, they come through with their master scythe and cut it off. What they want is a leaderless mass of people that they can handle exactly as they want.” Chip had a very interesting answer. He said “Jim, you're too negative about this. You should go back and read the reports of the initial Russian reactions to the German invasion. The love of freedom doesn't die quite that quickly. If you go back and read those reports you will find that the Russians welcomed the Germans. The Ukrainians, the Russians, they all welcomed them.”

There was even that horrible tragedy which took place in October 1941 when a German tank was just 7 kilometers from the Kremlin. The German officer commanding wrote a book about how he could see the towers of the Kremlin. At that moment, the Jewish population of Moscow went down into the streets to welcome the Germans. They had no idea of Hitler's anti-Semitic policies. They'd never been told. They rushed out, some of them with guns, and said “We'll shoot the first militia man [Russian for policeman] that we see”. Of course the militia had completely disappeared. Stalin had disappeared. Everybody had disappeared. The great tragedy is that these people didn't know what awaited them. But what Chip was saying was that these people by then had had more than 20 years of Bolshevism, and they were fed up with it. The general feeling was to welcome the Germans as liberators.

I then said to Chip, “Look, we owe a debt to some of these people in Hungary who have been on our side during the war against the Germans and who are on our side now so far as the Russians are concerned. And they are going to be slaughtered. I want authority to take out a certain number of people.” He said “We'll think about that”. I never heard from him again but I eventually got the authority to take out 25 people altogether: 15 had to be Members of Parliament, 10 I could choose myself. It worked out to be closer to 70 when it was all over, but nobody has ever reproached me for that.

I established an effective escape network. It was that which became the one and only card I could play to help Hungarians who were resisting the Russian takeover.

On one occasion I had to do this myself. The British had made a mistake somewhere and one of their people got picked up. The Hungarians Communists and the Russians arrested about 100 people, all tied to the British. At this point there was one man who was in my network, who was a great favorite of a Hungarian who was advising Grombach. I had been ordered months before “You take this man out.” So I consulted him at that time, and he said, “No. That's not the way it works. I'll tell you when I have to go out.” He was a very courageous man. I said, “All right, fine. I'll take care of it then.” I sent this word back to Washington and in exchange I received a very nasty message saying, “This man's safety is on your head. If you fail you're going to be in real trouble.” At a certain point, this man, who had founded a new party and had campaigned vigorously through the August 1947 election, had been beaten up with bicycle chains. Finally, when it was clear that his Parliamentary immunity would be lifted, he said the time had come for him to go.

At this point my network was lying low. Nobody could move because the countryside was swarming with Russian and Communist officials who'd picked up the people connected to the British. My people said, “We can't move right now.” So I went to the British, I knew who to go to, and he said quickly, “I can't do a thing”. There was another Britisher I knew. His answer was even more abrupt. “Don't bother me please. Just leave,” he said. That left it to me to do it. I did and it worked.

Q: How did you do it?

McCARGAR: You know, Volume IV of the Foreign Relations of the United States for 1947 contains a detailed account by George Andrews, First Secretary of our Embassy in Warsaw at the time, of how the Embassy in Warsaw got Vice Premier Mikolajczyk out of Poland that year. But that was because our Ambassador, Stanton Griffis, ordered that it be done, and paid attention to every step. In my case I had to move without the

Minister's knowledge or blessing. In fact, I was so aware of the possible complications that on leaving for Vienna I gave my secretary a sealed letter for the Minister, to be given to him if she did not hear from me within three days. It contained my pre-dated resignation from the Foreign Service.

As for my passengers, I gave them very careful instructions to leave their houses normally, in the morning, and go about their business. Then they were to meet me on a hill, that is now built up, but at that time was countryside. It was a long walk. They were to go up there after dark and I would pick them all up there. I got a truck from the Military Mission, a sort of van. I had an assistant, Edward Prince, in the Political Section. I told him to have the Military Mission garage deliver four cases to him at his home that would fit into the truck. I took the truck from the garage after dark, drove to my apartment, put on an Army parka (it was November), put a pistol in my pocket (sheer nonsensical bravado, but somehow reassuring), and drove to Prince's house.

We loaded the cases into the truck facing in such a way that the future inhabitants could climb into them, not over the top, but through the side. We covered all four cases with a large tarpaulin. I then drove on up to the hilltop. There were five persons waiting for me. The two men were both Members of Parliament, accompanied by their wives, and the daughter of one of the couples, a five-year-old girl, who fortunately had been drugged. (The M.P. besides the one Washington had ordered me to take out was also the Legation architect; Chapin himself had sent him to see me when he appealed to the Minister for help in leaving Hungary — though I never told Chapin what had transpired after that.) I got them arranged inside the boxes and covered with the whole thing with the tarp. I said, “Now, when I knock twice, absolute silence. Don't breathe. Nothing, just silence. If I knock 3 times, then you can talk. But twice, silence.” I then started out on the road to Vienna, four hours to the west.

I didn't realize that the Czechs, as part of the forthcoming Paris Peace Treaty, had already taken over what was known as the Bratislava bridgehead, five villages on the southern

side of the Danube, which had never been part of Czechoslovakia. The Czechs said they needed that land on the Hungarian side of the Danube for the strategic protection of Bratislava, which, of course, as Pozsony, had been the old Hungarian capital up until 1848. The main road from Budapest and Vienna ran through that area. I didn't realize that the Czechs had taken possession already. So what do I come across? I come across a Czechoslovak frontier station. This was unexpected. But they gave me no trouble, and my cargo behaved perfectly.

Then I went into Austria through a Russian checkpoint. No trouble. Then, further on in Austria, I came to a second Russian checkpoint. I was stopped by a Russian sentry. He wanted to know what was in the truck. I argued at great length with him. I got out, and we walked around the truck. I said I didn't know what was in the truck. I had an Army parka on (and I had a gun with me that it would have been insane to use. It was just to make me feel a little better). I said to the Russian, “I get my orders like you do. These are some American General's household effects. I can't let you see them.” Well, we went around. We kept arguing about this, until finally, a little bit tired, I got into the driver's seat and pulled out a cigarette. I offered him one and he took the cigarette. His hand was still up by the pack. One by one he took out about 12-15 cigarettes. Finally, he said he we could go. Which is why in a book I wrote about this, I commented, “You can bribe a Russian but it has to be in a friendly fashion. It can not be offered as a bribe. It has to be offered as a friendly gesture.”

We got up by Schwechat, by the airfield there just outside of Vienna. I expected more trouble there but the Russian sentry wasn't on duty. We sailed into Vienna and I tapped three times and shouted the Hungarian word for Vienna, which is “Becs.” The back of the truck exploded in hubbub. I avoided the International Zone in the center of Vienna, which was jointly patrolled by all four armies occupying Austria and Vienna. We got to the American Legation. I had called Martin Herz, whom I had known previously, and who was then in the Political Section of the Vienna Legation. (Herz was named Ambassador to Bulgaria in 1974, and in 1978 he joined Georgetown University, where he made an

outstanding contribution to the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.) I had asked Martin to wait up that night, although I didn't tell him what for. I unloaded my passengers in an unlit impasse next to the Legation, and we went into the Legation. I went up with my one special passenger to see Martin because this man didn't speak English, and I didn't speak German. Martin had made arrangements with Al Ulmer, who was then CIG Chief of Station in Vienna. A brilliant officer, Al had arranged a place for these people for the night, all five of them. When we got to the safe house there was a bottle of cognac. We finished the whole thing off. Our nerves were in quite a state — and after a few cognacs one of the wives began to cry at leaving her country. Understandable.

I gave instructions for this politician through Herz. Zoltan Pfeiffer was his name. He was the head of the Independence Party, and earlier, before the fragmentation of the Smallholders Party, he had been Under Secretary of State in the Justice Ministry. I gave him the money to get all five of them to the United States, and told him simply to ask to see “the Professor” when he got there. “You'll be taken care of from then on”. And indeed they were. That all worked perfectly. But we were still in Vienna, and the problem was to get these people out to the American airport at Tulln, in the Soviet Zone of Austria. This was Ulmer's job. I attended a meeting in his office the next morning. It was most impressive. He said “So and so, you do this, so and so, you do that” and so on. His men actually drove four of them out to Tulln, while Pfeiffer, who was easily recognizable, was flown out. The Army had a small little strip in Vienna from which they could fly across the Vienna Woods and then down into Tulln.

I had no official connection with Ulmer, but after all this was over, he said to me, “I understand that there is a special road between Austria and Hungary. If you go at night and you flash your lights twice, the sentry will let you through.” In other words, I didn't need any papers or anything else. The only trouble was Ulmer had only a vague idea of which road it was. We studied the map and I said “Fine, I'll try it”. So I changed cars. I had a soldier drive the truck back. I took a decent car and took out for Ulmer's special road. I hit it

by sheer good luck. Sure enough, there was a bar across the road. I flashed twice and this little figure came out and raised the bar, and I sailed through.

Then I lost my way and I found myself in a very odd little place. There was no moon or other light, and what I could see looked like low roofs with chimneys that were at kind of at a slant. I got out of the car and I was in a Russian tank park, which was no place to be. But I had learned by that time that there is a manner of speaking that you can use in Russian which means authority. So, very rudely, I said “Budapest!” and they gave me the instructions, almost saluting, and away I went. After that one, Selden said “Jim, I must ask you not to do those things personally yourself anymore.” I made no comment, since I was not supposed to discuss those matters with the Chief of Mission — but the question remains of how much Selden really knew of that operation, and how he knew it.

There were, of course, other problems in the life of the Legation.

The Counselor under Schoenfeld was Donald Bigelow. Bigelow was heir to a calendar company, in Minnesota I believe, and was very well fixed. He had just bought a plot of land in Gstaad. For a long time his wife didn't join him in Budapest, and he would leave all the time to go to Gstaad to oversee the construction of this very nice house. And, apart from that, he wasn't paying very much attention to what was really going on in Hungary. So when I went to the United States in June 1947, among others I called on in the Department was Tommy Thompson, then Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs. At one point Tommy asked me, “By the way, how is Don Bigelow doing?” Having not really learned my lesson from Howland Shaw, I told him. What I didn't know, and only found out later, was that Thompson and Bigelow were old friends, having been colleagues for years, in the Thirties, in Geneva.

When I got back to Budapest I noticed that Honor Bigelow, who by that time had shown up, turned her back on me at social functions. I went to Don and I said “Don, is there something troubling Honor?” He said “Well, it's troubling her, but it doesn't trouble me at

all.” I asked, “Let me go to see her and find out what it is”. So I went to see Honor. I found out later that Don was hiding behind the curtain, listening to everything. Honor said “You have been trying to destroy my husband's career. You told Tommy Thompson that my husband was not doing a good job”. I tried to work my way out of it, but you can't. I said that I thought he could have paid a little bit more attention to what was going on, although I understood the house was important. Anyway, Don got a blast from the Department, which obviously was not just from my talking to Tommy Thompson. Don was told that he would never again be given a responsible position in Europe. In fact, later, when it was clear that Jerry Drew was arriving to take over the post of Counselor, Bigelow was transferred to Addis Ababa. It was his last post, and he retired from there to Gstaad.

But before Don actually left, Selden had to do an evaluation of his performance, an efficiency report. And, damn it, he gave it to me to do. He said, “Here, Jim, say something nice about Bigelow.” Well, I did my best. I wrote rings of capability and incisive service around Bigelow, and Selden signed it. Before he sent it off to Washington, he showed it to Bigelow. Don came into my office afterwards to thank me for this. He said, a bit humorously, but sincerely, “I recognize your kind hand in this.” That was a very embarrassing position to be in. This man was much my senior. It was very decent of Don to do it, but it was an extremely awkward situation for me.

At the same time, as I said earlier, I was carrying on my affair with the wife of a British colleague. They had gone back to London, not permanently, and then he'd come back to Budapest. On his return he took up with the young Hungarian lady whom I had been consorting with for awhile. So I persuaded the English woman to come to Budapest. She had a perfectly valid visa. I met her at Tulln, I guess it was, and I got her into Hungary by my secret back road, though I had a false Russian pass for her that I had fixed. The damn car broke down in a village where the Russian troops were celebrating their departure the next day. All hell was breaking loose. We took refuge in a waffle factory, of all places, and one of the employees guided me to the Mayor's office, avoiding knots of drunken Russians at every corner. I called the Legation in Budapest to send a car out. They came, rescued

us, fixed the car, and after a wild night of celebration in the waffle factory that must have put production off for a month, we got back to Budapest.

I set the Englishwoman up in an apartment and in about a month, 3 weeks, a month later, I went on vacation to Italy. All I said to Selden and Jerry Drew was, “I'm going to northern Italy.” Jerry said, “I hope you're not going alone,” and I said, “No, I'm not going alone”. We took off, Geraldine and myself. Geraldine was a wonderful woman who died much too young. Anyway, she had known Portofino before the war, so we went to Portofino. I had a big Lincoln V-12, absolutely crazy thing to have in that part of the world at that time, but there it was. We were having a splendid time in Portofino. We got back to the hotel one night, and the manager said, “There's a message. Would you please call the American Consulate General in Genoa.” I called, and they said, “Please call the American Legation in Budapest.” The Italian police had found me in no time at all.

I called Budapest and Jerry Drew came on the line. “Jim,” he began, “we've just had what we call M-Day here.” First of all, the woman who owned the house that I was renting on the Danube as a weekend house, had some complaints. She came in and complained. Then the British Minister came in with Geraldine's husband. “This is a disgraceful situation, untenable,” he complained of Geraldine's presence in Budapest under my protection. (I might add here that the British Minister, Alexander Knox Helm, who was seeking to curry favor with the Labour Government, and I did not get along well, and this was a welcome opening for him.) Jerry Drew then completed his sketch of life in Budapest at that moment by saying, “We need you because a Congressional Delegation is due here next week. Please come back — and come back alone”. So I did. I arranged for Geraldine to go to Prague, to stay there with the wife of the Time-Life correspondent for Eastern Europe, Bob Low, who was none other than the OSS officer who had been on my 1942 flight from New York to Cairo.

Sure enough, shortly after my return, there was the Congressional Delegation, which included Senator Alben Barkley, a really delightful man.

Q: He was Senator from Kentucky, and later Vice President.

McCARGAR: He was also to be Douglas MacArthur II's father-in-law. Also he was the first Vice President to be popularly given the title of “Veep.” There was also Congressman John Lodge. I was not much impressed by him. (Some years later he was elected Governor of Connecticut, and he was also for a time Ambassador to Spain. Bob Low, my friend from Prague, was living in Spain then, and told me that John Lodge was the worst Ambassador we ever had there.) There were a number of others. It was a very interesting Delegation. They went on to Bulgaria and laid a wreath on the grave of Nikola Petkov, the Agrarian leader executed by the Communists not long before. They asked us about it in Budapest, and we said, “By all means do it.”

Then, in late November my man Deri, my efficient little leg man, was arrested. I went immediately to his wife, who was a very famous singer and a member of the Socialist Party. She was trying to get Anna Kethly, who was then head of the Social Democrats (in succession to Karoly Peyer, whom I had had taken out of Hungary), not the Socialists who were tied up with the Communists. But Kethly, who would later become Minister of State in the Imre Nagy Government during the 1956 Revolution, and the only Cabinet Minister to be out of the country when the Russians attacked, was at that time too frightened to do anything. We then sent an officer from the Legation to see Deri, and one of the wardens in the jail said to him, “You just hold on. We're going to get McCargar next.” This was reported back to us, we reported it to the Department. The reply was “McCargar is to leave Budapest as soon as possible but in no longer than four days”. (This is in Volume 4 of Foreign Relations of the United States for 1947.)

I went out via Prague, and that what was the end of what I knew even then was certainly to remain as one of the more interesting periods in my life.

Continuation of interview: May 1995

Q: Jim, you wanted to add three things. So add.

McCARGAR: I think it should be recorded that, in the early autumn of 1947, I was visited by Dr. Victor Csornoky, the son-in-law of Zoltan Tildy, the President of Hungary. He showed up at my house without any previous announcement. At the time I had as a house guest Bob Low, the Time-Life correspondent from Prague. Csornoky swept in, and, to my horror, wasted no time in saying that he wanted my help in arranging the escape of his father-in-law from Hungary. This was just after the August elections, so heavily falsified by the Communists. (Though the British Minister, Knox Helm, stated that he found them an excellent demonstration of democracy in action.) President Tildy had already made a public statement supporting the elections. So I swore Low, the Time-Life correspondent, to absolute secrecy. I told him, “You simply cannot even remember this. Just forget it.”

Then, after getting in touch with my network, I told Csornoky to have his father-in-law go down to Lake Balaton — the President had an official villa at the Lake (known fondly in landlocked Hungary as “the Hungarian Sea”). I told him to go there because there was no chance of taking him out of Budapest. I told him to spend ten days there. My man went down with his crew and they watched the place. They came back and reported that they considered the operation feasible. It was risky, but it could be done, it being understood that they could only take 8 persons maximum. I told Csornoky this. He came back and said his father-in-law insisted they had to be a party of twelve. I said, “This is a dangerous thing. You can't do this.” “No, it has to be twelve.” We argued this back and forth. Meanwhile, Low had forwarded this little bit of information to Time magazine in New York which, in one of its short columns there, said that the President of Hungary was trying to escape. Tildy issued a denial, and we had to abandon the operation. Low claimed that he had told New York not to publish, so that it was fault of some idiot editor in New York. Lesson: trust not the press, free or otherwise (but never let your mistrust show!).

That was not the end of it. While Tildy was allowed to stay on as President of the Republic for a time, Csornoky was named Hungarian Minister to Egypt. From Cairo he wrote me

a letter to my next post, suggesting we stay in touch. Aware of the danger he was in, I didn't answer it. Ignoring the surveillance by his own staff, he made other efforts to get in touch with Western intelligence agencies. Shortly thereafter, he was recalled to Budapest for consultation, arrested, tried, and executed. Tildy, who had lost his father-in-law top the Nazis, now had lost his son-in-law to the Communists. He was forced to resign the Presidency. He reappeared in 1956, during the Revolution, as a Minister of State in the Imre Nagy Government. Reportedly, he behaved courageously, refusing on the night of November 4, as the Russian attack began, to leave the Parliament until certain that all others were safely out of the building. He was arrested, imprisoned, and then held in limited detention until his death in 1961.

The second item I had in mind concerned the Paris Peace Conference. The Hungarian Delegation was running up against very great obstacles in making their case. There was no sympathy for the Hungarian cause in Paris at that time. The Hungarian Delegation there, headed by Prime Minister Nagy, was in Paris staying at the Hotel Meurice, where the American delegation was also staying —

Q:- Was this Imre Nagy?

McCARGAR: No. This was Ferenc Nagy. There were a lot of Nagy's. It's a very common name (in Hungarian it means only “big”.) This is the Nagy who became a great friend of mine in later years. He had a marvelous story, incidentally, about the Peace Conference. According to his anecdote, the Hungarian Delegation were sitting in the living room of their quarters at the Meurice, discussing all the terrible possibilities facing them. Suddenly, the door to the balcony of the room opened, and a man came in. Without a word he shut the door to the balcony, and walked across the room to the door into the hallway. As he started to close the door out into the hallway behind him, he stuck his head around, and said, “I am sorry. Monsieur returned unexpectedly.”

Nagy relished telling this story.

As the Allied procedures for the Peace Conference were worked out, it was left to the American Delegation to provide what support they could for the Hungarian position against a very punitive Soviet position, supported, of course, by the Czechoslovaks, with their territorial and ethnic aims, and the Romanians, who were getting Transylvania at Soviet insistence, with their territorial aims and ethnic fears that accompanied them. The problem confronting the American Delegation, headed by Bedell Smith in the Hungarian case, was that they really had very, very little support. So they sent a message to Budapest, which came to me, noting the existence of three problems facing them. “What we need is some sense of opinion from Hungarian leadership as to which — we can't do all three of these things — which is the most important issue for us to fight on?”

As it happened, Cardinal Mindszenty was coming into the Legation just those days. So I received him and talked with him. He pressed us for support of all the Hungarian desiderata. In the course of the conversation I mentioned the practical problems that we had in Paris, which made it impossible for us to achieve all that not only he, but the Hungarian Delegation as well, was seeking. He had with him a young priest as his interpreter. A rather pale young man. The Cardinal's general atmosphere was not what you would call cordial. He had a very severe countenance, but he had very beautiful hands, which he was obviously aware of. I posed the question to him saying, “There's the question of the Bratislava bridgehead — the five villages on the south side of the Danube. There's the question of the expulsion of the Hungarians from Slovakia.” I've forgotten what the third question was, Transylvania or whatever. I said, “If we can only concentrate on one thing, which would be helping you most? Which issue would be most valuable to you?” Well, the hands flashed through the air and they went this and that way. The acolyte then translated. I can only assume it was accurate. “His Eminence says,” repeated the young man in English, “that only a cheap politician could answer that question.”

The amusing thing about this is that sometime earlier, while Arthur Schoenfeld was still Minister, he received a letter one day from Cardinal Mindszenty which was completely

off-base. It was, in effect, a kind of incitement of the United States to engage in activities which were simply not diplomatically proper or politically feasible. Schoenfeld called me into his office, through that side door, and said, “The Cardinal is getting out of hand here. He's going to get himself into a great deal of trouble. What we want to do is in effect to give him a slap and put him in his place. So would you please draft something to that effect,” which I did. Schoenfeld approved and signed it and we sent it off. It was very courteously worded, of course, but in effect it said, “You're out of bounds.” The odd thing about it is that when Mindszenty was tried two years later in court in Budapest, this letter was produced by the prosecution, the Communist prosecution, as proof of his various dealings with the Americans imperialist. In other words, our letter trying to put him in his place was a sign that we were trying to overthrow the Hungarian Government. The Communists even published it in a White Book proving the nefarious plots between the Cardinal and the despicable Americans.

Absolutely ridiculous. But with all due respect for the Cardinal's subsequent heroism and sufferings, it should be noted that when he finally was released from the American Embassy in Budapest, years later, Rome did not receive him with great enthusiasm.

That was all I wanted to add on Budapest.

Q: You went straight to Genoa?

McCARGAR: No, I didn't. I was given some time off and I went to Switzerland. Actually, I went to the Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, where the Japanese, who had never done ski jumping before, had entered this difficult event. They just came down that ski jump and ended up in the trees. The trees were full of Japanese ski jumpers. But they were determined to do it, courageously and honorably, for the Emperor.

One of the people I'd sent out from Hungary, that I'd helped to escape, was down in Lausanne, at the Beau Rivage - Ouchy. At this moment King Michael of Romania came out, having been expelled by Vyshinsky and company, and went to that same hotel. So I

went down to see this man who had been part of my network in Budapest, to see what I could pick up in the way of information. My man was a very good friend of Prince Nicholas of Romania, uncle of King Michael, and King Carol II's younger brother. When I got there my man told me, “I was sitting in the bar last night, and Nicholas came down from a long session with his nephew. His eyes almost filled with tears, and he said, 'Can you believe it? That boy came out without any money!'” I found out a few years later, when I was in the Paris Embassy, and saw something of the man who had been Marshal of the Court, that what had happened was that the Russians, who handled the entire matter, gave the King on leaving the value of that year's crop from the Crown vineyards, which was about $104-105,000.

And that was it. Nothing more. Of course that didn't last long. He had to get rid of the entourage that came out with him. His mother, Queen Helen, had a place down in Tuscany, where she had 15 gardeners and a huge staff. The financial problem was insoluble. In time I learned more, but that was the first word I'd gotten about the real situation. Michael eventually became a pilot for Lear, the builder of Lear jets. Michael then tried investment banking, but that didn't go at all. He's a nice chap, but he's just not all that bright and he was always very much under his mother's domination.

I went from Lausanne to Paris, on orders, because I had suggested that I didn't want to go to Hamburg, which I had been told would be my next posting. This was probably a mistake on my part, but I was one of those people who simply wanted to have nothing to do with the German problem right after the war. As I say, this was no doubt a mistake. I remember meeting with other young officers whom Jimmy Riddleberger was trying to assemble as a crew to go into Germany. I was not convinced by his argument. He eventually got enough people. While I waited, eventually the word came through that I was assigned to Genoa. It was a copy of a message to the Rome Embassy, very laudable, saying that I had shown great ability for combating communism, and so forth. As became habitual, the Italian elections then coming up — 1948 — were critical.

Before I left Paris, Merle Cochran, who later became Ambassador to Indonesia, was then an Inspector, and was in Paris on inspection — which would have effects which I'll touch upon later. But when I first went to Budapest, the Military Mission and the Legation were at loggerheads. It's quite true that the Military Mission was as corrupt as you can get. They had a sergeant who sat at the reception desk when you came into the Mission and said, “Gold to the right, diamonds to the left, etc.” They were all engaged in this kind of thing. The pilot of our plane told me, when we flew up to get Chapin and Drew, that for the previous year, 1946, he had declared $75,000 of income. This was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army Air Corps.

Q: We're talking about 1946, when I think General Eisenhower was picking up about $10-12,000 a year. That was his salary.

McCARGAR: This pilot looked at me, kind of winked, and said “My wife has some holdings.” I knew what they were, because he was heavily engaged in black market currency operations. He said to me, “If they ever try to get me, I can bring down the whole command of the Air Corps.” They did try to try him many years afterwards, and he did get away with it.

But in the midst of all this, the Military Mission had made counter charges about the Legation. The result was an inspection mission, consisting of Cochran for State and a General Tower for the military, to examine the whole thing. I was the new boy on the block. I wasn't touched with any of this, so I had to act as Secretary of this Commission of Inquiry. I heard things that made my hair stand on end for the first two or three weeks that I was in Budapest.

Q: You're talking about major corruption within the ranks of both diplomatic and military. Right after the war there was an awful lot of loose money and objects of art.

McCARGAR: If you recall, at Potsdam, General Vaughan, who was Truman's great favorite, took off from Potsdam, flew up to Stockholm, invested in watches, flew back to Potsdam, and sold them all over the place. In protesting about it I've talked to men who answered, “I was in the First World War and, believe me, all armies are the same. This is the way it is.”

While I was in Paris Geraldine, the Englishwoman who was about to be the former wife of my British colleague in Budapest, was with me. I went to Cochran. I explained, “I have this relationship, and eventually we will put in it in order. The question is, do you think I can take this lady with me to Genoa?” Cochran looked at me, very nicely, and said, “If I could recommend something for you not to do, that is it.” He said the wife of the former Consul General who had retired in Genoa was a very good friend of Mrs. George Marshall. “You wouldn't last very long,” said Cochran, who wished me well. I of course took his advice.

Genoa was not a success. I was greeted politely enough by John Bailey, the Consul General, but he made it clear that he was not happy about my assignment, as he was anxious that his second-in-command, Roger Heacock, as I recall, be promoted. For that Bailey was counting heavily on Heacock's political work during the election campaign. The result was that he gave me no political assignments, notwithstanding the Department's explanatory cable of what was expected from me. The only work he assigned to me was liaison with the British Consulate in their efforts to impede Jewish immigration to Palestine, which, with Russian support in the East and Communist support locally, passed mostly through Italy.

My situation was not improved when a cable arrived one day from the Rome Embassy for me which, when decoded, was still encoded. Bailey handed it to me with considerable severity. “Is there anything you are doing here that I don't know about and should know about?” he asked. I said there was nothing of that kind.

After I had decoded the cable, it turned out to be a follow-up inquiry from my Pond successor in Budapest. I answered the cable, via Rome, and Bailey consented to its transmittal. The next step in this minor drama was a summons to Bailey's office. Without a word he handed me another cable, addressed to me via Rome, like its predecessor. I took it, expressing some mystification, repaired to my office, and decoded the message. What had gone wrong was that I had lost my touch. In coding my answer to the first message, I had transposed only once, instead of twice, so my message was unreadable in Budapest. This time I exercised double care to do it right, took the final result in to Bailey for transmittal, and, without going into detail, simply said that I had made an encryption error in replying to the first message. The temperature in the room was not perceptively improved.

While in Genoa my chief escape operative from Hungary, having taken care of himself and his, showed up with the Princess he had lived with since the Germans executed her husband, and a young Countess who, as a bartender in a Budapest hotel, had acted as a message center and letter drop for me. It was a jolly reunion, but obviously more was expected of me than I could deliver. My operative was hoping to avoid life in Austrian refugee camps by smuggling American cigarettes out of Genoa to Austria and Germany. Apart from the abundance of American cigarettes in those countries, what with the Occupation troops, I had to tell my friend he would do no such thing so long as I was in Genoa.

They returned to the Salzburg camp they had left, leaving me to explore Genoa. A strange Italian city. No music. No theater. Just so many hundreds of thousands of tons of goods, going in and out of the port, with the Genoese taking their cut. But there were diversions. There were street demonstrations in preparation for the elections. If they were organized by the Christian Democrats, nothing happened. If organized by the Communists, they usually became riotous, at which point the Carabinieri, aboard jeeps, would drive at high speed — they were called the “celeri” — right into the crowds. Caught once in such an

affair, I miraculously went straight up one of those stone pillars that line the Italian street arcades. This was, of course, the period when the Carabinieri fired on a Communist demonstration in the Po Valley, killing nine demonstrators. The Communists held a funeral ceremony that went the whole length of the Po, rousing the population everywhere. The British Ambassador in Rome was exercised by what he regarded as not just brutality, but also as crass stupidity. Approaching Minister of the Interior Scelba, a tough Sicilian, at a reception, the Ambassador said, “Why in Heaven's name fire on them. Why not use fire hoses, or water cannon?” Scelba looked at him coldly. “We have a shortage of water in Italy,” he said.

But the simple fact was that I played no role in the 1948 Italian elections.

Q: Was Claiborne still there when you were there?

McCARGAR: Claiborne Pell was Consul in Bratislava when I was in Budapest. I used to see him whenever I'd go to Vienna, or Prague. From Prague Bratislava was on the road to Budapest, from Vienna it was a minor detour.

Q: His next assignment was to Genoa, but that was after you left. Can you talk about the American participation in the elections of 1948? They were probably the one election where you might say the American influence was a factor. Can you talk about that?

McCARGAR: I will touch upon that in connection with my next assignment, because it had to do with that. What you are suggesting was of course the case. American activity approached the frantic. It was embarrassing (I thought) to see American Ambassador Jimmy Dunn going up and down the Italian peninsula making speeches in favor of the Christian Democrats. The phrase later used, obviously a vast exaggeration, was that Eddie Page was leaning out the windows of the Embassy passing money to all the Christian Democrats. The money was plentiful. Of course we went all out, and there was, in all fairness, plenty of other money going to the Communists.

The one thing that was effective was the letter-writing campaign that was handled from Washington with the Italian communities in the United States. That helped. For example, A. P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America (originally the Bank of Italy), who was a friend of my father in San Francisco, came from a village just behind Genoa. If not a Genovese, he was certainly a Ligurian. He visited his home village before the elections, saying the right thing everywhere. The whole area was swamped with letters from San Francisco, where there was a heavy Ligurian population. It was a very effective campaign.With the elections over, my personal affairs in some disorder, and with Bailey's attitude (although he very correctly declined to complete an efficiency report on me on the grounds that I had not been in Genoa long enough), I realized that Genoa was not the place for me to stay. I asked for home leave at my own expense which was granted.

Once returned, I had to follow the Service's old rules to straighten out my personal affairs. As you know, when you asked permission to marry a foreigner, you had at the same time submit your resignation. Chris Ravndal, himself a supporter, if not an actual member of the Pond, was Director General of the Service. I approached Chris on the subject of my marriage to an Englishwoman, and he said, “You can do it.” Sure enough, he was as good as his word. I submitted my request and my resignation in connection therewith, and got a telegram (in California) in reply granting my request and ignoring my letter of resignation.

But Chris got his pound of flesh. At one point he called me in, and we discussed the Pond. What he wanted me to do was to see Norman Armour, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and make the case for continuing the Pond. (I did not know then what I learned much later, that this was a subject of some burning discussion at the top levels of the Department.) I saw Mr. Armour, very courteous, and totally reserved. He really didn't ask me any questions, but I explained to him what I had done in Hungary, and pointed out that it would have been impossible without the capabilities provided by the Pond. The decision was favorable, for awhile, but I knew nothing of it for another six years. What happened (whether with or without Secretary Armour's agreement I don't know) was that

the Department took over the Pond operation secretly and continued to run it. This was, in fact, contrary to the National Security Act of 1947. In 1951 — they turned it over, as they should have done before, to the CIA. There are two interpretations of this move: either some in the Department got a guilty conscience, or, as the late Larry Houston, former General Counsel of the CIA, told me on more than one occasion, the State Department was having so much trouble hiding the budget of this operation within the Department's budget, that they just decided it was too much trouble. And with the operation to the CIA went the list of Foreign Service personnel, which plays a role later on. I didn't know this at the time.

With my personal affairs in order, the question was where was I going to go. They proposed to send me to Tabriz. I think it was Tehran first, and then Tabriz. There was some objection to that assignment for me among the people who handled that area. They said I didn't really speak Russian! The kind of nice treatment that you sometimes get in the corridors of the State Department. An indirect touch of publicity (perhaps a glancing blow is a better term) at that moment may not have helped everywhere. American foreign correspondents in Vienna and Budapest, picking up stories here and there, had not written about me, but passed on their stories to Pat Frank, a well-known journalist, and wartime assistant to Robert Sherwood at the OWI. Frank then wrote a novel, An Affair of State, which appeared in 1948. Set in Hungary, it was believed by some in the Department that my work was the basis for the fiction — in which the great obstacle to the hero's success is, of course, the Department itself. Again, no help.

My wife was very enthusiastic about going to Tehran, but I was not. Meanwhile, Al Ulmer, the former CIG Chief of Station, was in Washington. He arranged a breakfast for three of us, Frank Wisner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas, Ulmer, and myself at the Hay-Adams. (To avoid any misunderstanding, this Frank Wisner was the father of our former Ambassador to Egypt and current Ambassador to India.) I was told at the time that Wisner was General Marshall's personal choice to head what became the Office of Policy Coordination, a new and completely autonomous organization. This was

where covert and clandestine operations were to be secretly conducted. Some nitwit had suggested it be lodged in the President's Executive Offices. And then some brilliant mind said, “That's too close to the President. Get it away from there”. So OPC was lodged in the CIA — which had just been formed the previous year (we're now in 1948).

I breakfasted with Wisner and Ulmer. After some discussion of what was feasible in the Soviet-occupied areas of Europe, Frank asked if I would join his staff. I said I would be very honored to do so, but I wanted to consult in the Department first. The way the OPC, the Office of Policy Coordination, was set up — authority was vested in the National Security Council, under NSC Directive 10/2, which had a tack-on sentence at the end authorizing covert operations in support of democratic forces abroad. That was the authority. Actual guidance came from the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In other words, Wisner had no responsibilities directly to Admiral Hillenkoetter, then Director of Central Intelligence. In fact, Frank, who had the title of Deputy Director for Policy Coordination, never even attended the Director's staff meetings. On the other hand, the CIA was charged with providing OPC with quarters and logistical support. Furthermore, Wisner could call on any agency of the Government for personnel and such support as he may require. It was a very open-ended thing. The CIA was, of course, a publicly known agency — whose operations were secret. OPC's operations were not only secret, the existence of the organization itself was also secret. It was, in fact, for its first years, and this must be emphasized, since few people now seem aware of it, the most secret thing in the U. S. Government after nuclear weapons.

Curiously enough, George Kennan, of whom I am certainly an admirer, has in recent years tried to make it appear that he was not supportive of this initiative. The fact is that if you go into the documents of the period concerning the establishment of OPC, its links to the State Department, and the formation of the National Committee for Free Europe, you'll find

that on the great majority of those papers there are only two signatures, those of Frank Wisner and George Kennan.

The reason the State Department was interested in this was that the British had taken the position that they had lodged and supported the Governments-in-Exile in London during the Second World War. “ Your turn,” they said to us. “We're not going to do it again. All yours.” So all of these exiles from Eastern Europe came to the United States. They inundated the State Department. Former prime ministers, former foreign ministers, former finance ministers, allies, friends — and the Department was simply not equipped to handle it. The first organizational object of OPC (apart from filling its own roster) was to set up an organization which could take care of these people, which could receive them , which could discuss matters authoritatively with them, and which would have the resources to help them, not merely individually, but also politically.

Before I accepted Wisner's kind invitation, I went to Loy Henderson and told him that I'd been asked to do this. Did he think it was a sensible thing for me to do? I had even then a vague suspicion that somehow, I didn't know how or why, it would not be looked upon favorably by the Department in time to come. Loy answered, “By all means, Jim. We want as many of our people in this new activity as we can get there.” I will interject here that I spent nearly two years at OPC, and in those two years I saw one other Foreign Service Officer there. He came by for two weeks to write a paper. That's how far the Foreign Service got into it. On the other hand, OPC's political guidance was handled by Bob Joyce and John Davies in the Policy Planning Staff.

Q: The Policy Planning Staff, it waxes and wanes, but essentially it has waned. In those days, it was really much closer to the National Security Council that developed later on than not, wasn't it?

McCARGAR: A good point. It was in a waxing phase at that moment. It had just been founded shortly before.

Q: It was really sort of an operational thing?

McCARGAR: Yes. For example, in the autumn of '48, I reported to Wisner's office. At that point, there were only ten of us, including Wisner, a couple of officers, the secretaries, and myself. Ten people. Within a year, we were 450, and a few years after that there were so many thousands, and so on. It was very small when we got started.

My first job — this is why, when you asked about Italy I said it shows up a little later — my first job was to write a policy paper for covert operations in Italy. Everyone concerned was shocked by the way the problem had been handled in the 1948 elections. I wrote the paper, 20 pages. I wrote it in the Policy Planning Staff, under John Davies' guidance. I took it to John when I'd finished, and said, “John, I'm terribly sorry, but this is 20 pages long.” He said, “The subject is worth it, isn't it?”, which was a good answer, of a kind I was not accustomed to (except for my chiefs in Budapest). Attached to the end of that 20-page explanation was a list of operational suggestions and possibilities that could be done as covert actions. The paper was approved, and sometime later I attended a meeting in Tommy Thompson's office — Tommy was then Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. The object was to get British concurrence in the policy for Italy.

Those present were Tommy, Sir Gladwyn Jebb (not yet Lord Gladwyn, I think, but a major character in American eyes because of his work as British Delegate to the UN Security Council), and George Jellicoe, who handled policy aspects of these matters at the British Embassy, and myself. (George, whose war record in the SBS — Secret Boat Service — was outstanding, was known as “the belted Earl,” despite which he was a great favorite of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin.) Now, the policy laid out in that paper, which had been approved by the Policy Planning Staff, was support for the non-Communist Left. In other words, we were trying to push away from sole reliance on the Demo-Christiani on the Right. This meant an effort to break up the Socialist Party, which

eventually succeeded, and to support the Social Democrats, under Saragat, who of course later became President of Italy.

The British in this meeting approved the whole policy. They agreed with it fully (mind you, we were dealing with a Labour Government). But when they came to the last, detailed page, with these nasty little suggestions about what really to do concretely, Sir Gladwyn studied it for a moment. Then he held it toward me, delicately, the way you would hold a dead rat —

Q: You put it in your two fingers together at a distance from you.

McCARGAR: Exactly. He just picked the page up and handed it over the table to me, saying, “I think you should keep this.”

Q: Let me ask you a question. When one sits down there - was this just you sitting there looking up at the ceiling and saying we'll do this, or were you drawing on the wartime experience of the OSS, their sort of “dirty tricks?” Where does one dream up how one does these basically covert actions? I'm trying to get into the mind, the inspiration for this type of thing?

McCARGAR: It was a composite of what had been done in the past and what we thought we could do in the current circumstances. For example, Joyce had been very active in the OSS. Although Joyce was an FSO, he'd gone on military leave as Charlie Thayer (a West Point graduate, and Chip Bohlen's brother-in-law) did, and a few others had done (earlier than those like myself did). Joyce had gone out during the war and into the OSS. He had played a very important role at the Bari headquarters of OSS operations into the Balkans. He knew a great deal about the subject so I had the advantage of that much background. Then I had the advantage of having been briefly in Italy and having some sense of what their situation was, as well as the general European balance of forces. Also, I had my own

experience in Hungary of what was feasible and was not feasible. All went into the policy and planning at that early stage.

Q: I don't know whether you can answer or not answer, was this the germ of what later became something which turned out to be quite an embarrassment to a lot of Italian politicians? Are you familiar with that?

McCARGAR: No.

Q: This was basically the stay-behind organizations. If the Soviets were to overrun Italy or something like that, we — as I gather strictly from newspapers — built up sort of resistance organizations which the then-Right Wing within the Italian Government used for some of their own purposes. Reportedly there were abundant stockpiles for a stay-behind organization.

McCARGAR: Yes. But that was not part of the political plan for Italy, nor was it specifically Italian. “Stay-behind organizations” were a part of the requirements, and the most urgent, laid on OPC by the Joint Chiefs, whose perspective was of course military. The Italian “stay-behind” operation was only a part of a Europe-wide scheme. For example, Bill Colby, whom I will come to later, when he joined OPC — he was recruited into OPC by a man named Jerry Miller, who had been Colby's OSS case officer when he was parachuted into France and then into Norway during the war — Colby's first assignment was Stockholm, where he was establishing the stay-behind networks, providing them with communications equipment, and that kind of thing. That one never blew up as far as I know. When his Swedish assignment ended, Colby went later to the Rome Embassy. For myself, after I wrote the policy paper, I had nothing further to do with Italian affairs.

By this time, end of 1948, beginning of 1949, Wisner was getting his organization into shape. I was made Chief of the Southeastern European Division, which meant Hungary,

Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey — which was, God knows, enough to fill anybody's plate.

Q: You had a major civil war going on there, and everything else?

McCARGAR: Oh, yes. The first operation undertaken by OPC was related to a number of the countries in my area, to wit, the formation of the National Committee for Free Europe for the reasons I recited above. (I did negotiate the first agreement between the Hungarian National Committee and the NCFE.) Ambassador Joseph Grew was Chairman of the NCFE, and De Witt Poole (who had been U. S. Consul in Irkutsk during the Russian Revolution) was the first President. We used to call him “little Napoleon.” He didn't last very long.

The Committee was set up originally without any specific intent to do broadcasting. But Frank Altschul, a New Yorker who was on the Board of Directors of the NCFE, pushed energetically for those broadcasts. They eventually began in 1952 and eventually became, of course, the most important part of the whole operation. I should cite here the old bromide about generals always fighting the previous war. The Radio Free Europe broadcasts were a case in point — inspired originally by the role of the BBC during the Second World War (though RFE ultimately developed its own approach and techniques in keeping with the changing times and a new situation). But it is a fact that we were all under the influence of the Second World War. It was the largest experience of our lives up to that point, and it had only ended three years before.

There were other things going on in the early years which, in accordance with the usual need to know, I didn't know about. That is to say, the drops into the Soviet Union, the Ukraine chiefly, and Poland — all of which blew up very, very badly.

The major operation with which I was directly involved concerned Albania. That operation was originally a British idea, pushed forcefully by Julian Amery, who had been in Albania during the war with the SOE, and he and his colleagues had been treated very badly

by Hoxha and his nascent Communist Party. After the war Amery had been elected to Parliament (his father, Leopold Amery, also an M.P., had been a member of the British Cabinet during the war.) Julian Amery wrote a very good book, Sons of the Eagle, about the British experiences in Albania during the war. It became our bible.

Otherwise, we knew very little about Albania and the Albanians. Nevertheless, we did our research, talked to people who did know, and put together the political picture. The British were very strong for this operation. It was, of course, ultimately discussed by Bevin and Acheson, and agreement reached at that level. On the lower, operative level, we were engaged in joint planning with the British. Their enthusiasm was evident when I went on a mission to London to discuss it with them. Shortly after the war, the Albanians had mined the Strait of Corfu, the passage between Corfu and the Albanian mainland, and two British cruisers had been very badly damaged, Royal Navy personnel injured and killed. The British were extremely annoyed about this, to put it mildly. Their continuing ire was visible in the suggestion of one of the British MI-6 officers, who said, “Why don't we send a couple of cruisers through there again and this time, when they blow us up, then we'll really go in and clean the place out.” (He really meant for the British to blow up their own ships.) That was dismissed.

The American understanding of the operation was that it was a probe. That is to say, the idea was to send people in who would come back out, or report by radio, as to whether there was any real possibility of a sufficient resistance movement in the country to combat the Hoxha Government. Now, the British were part of this, it being an Anglo-American operation — but we had no place to operate from. At that point the Greek fracas had not been cleared up, and was still going on.

Q: You're talking about the Greek civil war?

McCARGAR: Yes, the Greek civil war. We wanted to use Wheelus Air Base in Libya which was a British Trusteeship at that time. Bevin refused, because of some wartime

commitment that they had to Idris el-Senussi, who was then King of Libya. Italy, obviously, would have been a political mistake. So Malta cropped up as the only practical possibility. As Frank Wisner said, “Whenever we're in trouble, the British always have a little piece of territory that's very useful.”

Q: Bevin was the Foreign Minister, the British Foreign Minister?

McCARGAR: Right. Actually, if I may interject here, Frank Lindsay, who was my direct boss at OPC, some forty years later wrote a book which included mention of some of this Albanian material. Over in the CIA, a young lady, whose name I've forgotten but wouldn't use even if I remembered it, was in charge of going through manuscripts and saying “You can say this, but you can't say that.” She wrote Lindsay a letter in which she said they couldn't forbid him to mention the Albanian thing, so much already having come out about it, but they would prefer that he didn't. Frank He called her on the telephone and asked, “What is all this about?” He explained, “If you read Acheson's Present At The Creation, his discussions with Bevin on the Albanian operation are all perfectly clear there. In Foreign Relations of the United States, those Acheson-Bevin discussions are all there in print.” There was a long pause. Then, tentatively, the young lady said, “That would be Christopher Bevin?”

Q: The girl had never heard of Ernest Bevin?

McCARGAR: And this is just a three or four years ago. It's a little disconcerting, as you must agree, to learn that what was an active part of our younger lives, no longer exists in the minds of the current generation.

In any event, the British then sent over H. A. R. Philby, Kim, as he was called, to the British Embassy in Washington, representing the heads of both MI-5 and MI-6. When Philby and I were together, we constituted the command of the operation. We had a room assigned to us in the secure part of the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff area. There we would meet and issue our instructions as they became necessary. The fact of the matter

was that as long as I was there, which was the case until May of 1950, we were chiefly concerned, or at least I was chiefly concerned, with organizing the political side of the operation.

We did have three expeditions from Malta by ship. When the first one went, I got a call from Jim Angleton, who was handling counterintelligence for OSO, the secret intelligence branch of the CIA, and the man who later became so famous for counterintelligence in the CIA. Angleton and I had very good relations. He called me to his office, and with great glee he read me — Angleton, I should add, who had been partly brought up in Italy, and served there in the OSS at the end of the war, had totally penetrated the Italian secret service; he ran it — he read me a report which obviously he'd gotten from the Italians about our first physical operation in Albania: the name of the ship was “Stormy Seas” (correct), it passed the Strait of Otranto at such-and -such a time, on board were so-and-so, the whole thing. What he didn't tell me, of course, was that the OSO itself was running operations into all these areas, Albania included, which they never told us about. We didn't consult them about our operations, either. But it would have helped a bit if we'd known that the OSO had agents in Albania.

Q: Where were they getting their intelligence? Do you know where they were finding out what you were all up to?

McCARGAR: From the Italians. The largest group of Albanian refugees were in Italy, and they were thoroughly penetrated by the Italians. In fact, many years later, I went down to Rome to re-form the Albanian National Committee. This was in a later stage, and the Italians were all over me. They knew exactly what was going on every minute of the time (and the Palazzo Chigi delighted in passing it all along to the Italian press). So this is where Angleton was getting his information from. Notwithstanding what Philby subsequently wrote from Moscow in his memoirs, which I reviewed for The New York Times in 1967, I have always insisted that it was not Philby who gave away the Albanian operation to the Russians and thus to the Albanians. The Albanian community in Italy was

so thoroughly penetrated, not only by the Italians but by the Communists, that to me that was where the Russians were getting their information, as were the Albanian Communist authorities. I've emphasized that point whenever the subject has come up — plus the fact that my successor at OPC, then an Army Colonel, has informed me that he never gave Philby operational information.

I considered that Philby and I were friends. Philby was a man of great charm. He had a pronounced stammer, which somehow didn't affect one's relations with him. When he started to stammer, you just waited and he eventually found the word and went on. As I said to somebody later, we all came out of the Second World War floating on a sea of alcohol. Drinking was not a sin during the Second World War and these habits stayed on. But Philby was the most extraordinary drinker I've ever come across. I'm told that later on in Beirut, before he absconded, he would even drink after-shave lotion. Anything. Many and many a night I saw him very, very drunk. His idea of heaven was a pitcher of martinis that you drank all night.

I did meet Guy Burgess in his house.

Q: Just for the record, Philby was the Soviet spy par excellence within the British system.

McCARGAR: In the British secret service — MI-6, also known as the SIS.

Q: Burgess and Maclean were two secondary Soviet agents, but still very important?

McCARGAR: Donald Maclean was a career British Foreign Service Officer. He had been on station here in Washington in the Embassy and had full access to atomic matters and much other secret material. Then he had been recalled to London where he was in charge of American affairs in the Foreign Office. Guy Burgess bounced back and forth, in and out of various government posts. Burgess was regarded by some Britishers as a very attractive man.

As I explained earlier, I had an English wife at this time. The first time we met Burgess at Philby's house (Philby's letting Burgess stay with him was to prove one of his most serious mistakes), when we left — she herself knew a great deal about secret operations from her job in the Air Ministry during the Second World War — she said of Burgess, “That is not a good frequentation. One stays away from Mr. Burgess.” Apparently, he was openly homosexual, but he had a very nasty side. He went to a party one night, given by one of the CIA people who was an ex-FBI man, and Burgess had a great talent for drawing. He drew a cartoon of his hostess which was scatological and insulting and almost led to a fist fight right then and there on the spot. He was a bad actor.

The story is that to get out of Washington, Burgess deliberately got three speeding tickets in one day. He was sent back to London. Whether that's true or not, I'm not quite sure. But in any event, Burgess was sent back to London. The assumption is that he came back with the word, which he'd gotten from Philby, that they were closing in on Maclean. So then the two of them fled and showed up in Moscow some months later. Reportedly, Philby was astounded to learn that Burgess had gone with Maclean. Nobody has ever really understood why he did this. Philby, Burgess, and Maclean were all the group recruited at Cambridge in the Thirties by Anthony Blunt, later (until publicly unmasked) Sir Anthony, and Keeper of the Queen's Art Collection.

I had always felt and I still feel that there has been considerable misunderstanding of Philby's case. I mention it because of Anthony Cave Brown's recent book about Philby, in which he tries to link Philby's actions to those of his father, St. John Philby, an Arabist who became very close to Ibn Saud, and was in fact interned by the British themselves, briefly during the Second World War, as a dangerous citizen. But there were plenty of British officers in the Eastern services who became Moslems, who in effect “went native” so to speak. And St. John Philby was one of them. But there was no treason involved in his case. Whereas with Kim Philby there definitely was. My view is that Philby's pretensions of ideological devotion to the Soviet cause are a corrective that he added as time went

on. I think that somewhere he made a dreadful mistake. Either the Russians were holding him hostage to that, or at some point he may have considered getting out because, mind you, he went into the movement just at the moment when Stalin began killing all of his own people in Western Europe. I have a whole list of names of these people found dead along the railroad tracks, or hung in a forest from a tree. Even the great Leopold Trepper, who ran the wartime ring called “the Red Orchestra” during the Second World War in Western Europe was called back to Moscow after the war and promptly imprisoned. He was in prison for a long time, too, until after Stalin died. My guess is that Philby may have thought of leaving, of getting out of his commitment, and was simply told “You don't leave this business,” or at least “You don't leave it alive.” This would have accounted for what went on thereafter.

As I say, he was my colleague and I thought he was a friend. In fact, when I was in the Paris Embassy, after I left OPC, I didn't know what had gone on here in Washington, but I suspected that the Americans had forced Philby out of the British service, MI6. That this was American pressure. I bumped into Angleton one day in the lobby of the Crillon Hotel in Paris. I said, “Jim, my wife and I have access to a flat in Lowndes Square in London. We frequently go there on weekends, when it's possible. I plan the next time I'm in London to invite Philby for a drink, unless you tell me that this would not be a prudent nor a wise thing to do.” “On the contrary”, said Angleton, “I think it would definitely be the thing to do, because I still believe that someday Philby is going to be head of the British Service”. So the next time I was in London I got in touch with Philby. I can't remember how, but I did. He was living down in the country. He came, looking somewhat seedy but generally well. In conversation over drinks, I said that if there was anything I could do to help him, I'd be delighted. He said, “No. Everything is all right.” He was going to Spain, sponsored by The Times, to write a history of the Spanish Civil War, which he had covered for The Times from the Franco side. I said, “Good. Let me know.” Fortunately, I never heard from him again.

Q: How about when you were dealing with Philby, was anybody within the American intelligence community saying, "Watch this guy. I don't really like him?"

McCARGAR: Not a person. No one. And anyone who says the contrary is just adding correctives later on. There was no one who had any idea about this. As Trevor Roper, later Lord Dacre, and Regius Professor of History at Oxford, who worked with Philby during the war, summed it up, "We were all taken in." And we all were.

Q: Back to the Albanian thing. I'm not quite clear, what were you all planning to do? What was this going to do?

McCARGAR: The geographical-political situation was primary. The Yugoslavs, who had dominated Albania up to the point when they broke with Moscow, then lost their domination of Albania. Hoxha, ever anxious to keep domination as far away as possible (later he broke with the Russians, and sided with the Chinese), declared his allegiance to Stalin and Moscow. For the first time since the post-war Soviet occupation of Central and Eastern Europe, there was an isolated Soviet satellite — Albania. Cut off from its Soviet sponsor, except by sea, and surrounded by neighbors with various territorial claims on the country.

As I say, it was a probe, an effort to assess the situation in a hostile area. We were sending people in to find out whether there was sufficient possibility of resistance to Hoxha to make it worthwhile to enter into supply arrangements and all the rest, to build up a resistance force. What unfortunately happened was that all these people, practically all them, it was not 100 percent, but most of them, were picked up almost immediately by the Sigurimi, the Albanian secret police.

As the operation went on, Malta was dropped, and the Americans really took the thing over. They would do air drops from Greece using Polish pilots in case the planes were shot down. No Americans or English involved. They dropped these people and, of

course, most of them landed to find themselves looking into the guns of the Sigurimi. The Albanians were well taught by the Russians, so the captured agents were then instructed to get in touch with their headquarters by radio. All of them had a signal which meant, “I have been captured and I'm under control,” which usually showed up in the first four or five cipher groups that they transmitted by key. All of them had this, and almost all of them used it. But it was never picked up in the headquarters back in Greece, which is pretty shocking. It went on until 1953, when Hoxha had a big trial of the captives in Tirana. Each one told his story in court. At that point the Americans at last gave up. The British had in effect slid off earlier. It had ended up really as an alliance between the Americans and Zog, the former King, who had a half-American wife (she is still alive). In other words, it was thoroughly penetrated and it was a failed operation.

I had left in 1950, long before it got to that stage, because of trouble at OPC with a former Foreign Service Officer named Carmel Offie, who is pertinent to the story. Offie had been a F.S.clerk in, I believe, Colombia, when Ambassador Bullitt opened our Embassy to the Soviet Union in 1934. Bullitt wanted a stenographer. Offie had that ability, so he was assigned to the Moscow. He and Bullitt hit it off right from the start. This was a little bit difficult to believe if you knew Offie as I knew him. He was a remarkably ugly man, physically. He had a brilliant, quick mind. It was not very deep, it was a bit shallow, but it was very lively. Also, as it turned out, he was openly, an avowed homosexual. He and Bullitt became very close and he went with Bullitt when the Ambassador — who had meanwhile had Offie made a Foreign Service Officer — was transferred to Paris. In the last days before the fall of the French capital, Offie, on behalf of himself and Bullitt went around buying up properties around Paris (in one of which I stayed later when I went to the Paris Embassy). Bullitt's brother Orville wrote a book about the Ambassador in which Offie is a heroic, splendid, charming figure.

There is something about Offie I have never understood: he had a vast range of connections with everybody of any consequence in the Foreign Service. Senior people would come to Washington and stay with him. Bullitt had bought him a house on Woodley

Road, which was the cause of much inquiry later on by J. Edgar Hoover, Bedell Smith, and others. Bob Murphy, for whom Offie had worked at Caserta and Frankfurt was Offie's close friend and protector; Freddy Reinhardt would stay at Offie's house when visiting Washington; countless others of that level were in and out of the Woodley Road house.

A major drama had taken place before that, in 1944. Bill Bullitt had a visceral loathing for Sumner Welles. He kept going to Franklin Roosevelt, saying. “You've got to get rid of this man,” because Welles reputedly had a weakness for black men. But FDR and Welles were schoolmates, and when FDR came to Washington in March 1933 to assume the Presidency, he came four days early and stayed with the Welleses.

In 1944 Welles came down to Washington on the night train from New York. One of the black porters on the train filed a complaint against Welles. At this time the Pennsylvania Railroad had its own police. The Railroad police sent the porter's complaint up to the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, a man named Atterbury, a Philadelphia friend and political ally of Bullitt. Atterbury passed the charge sheet on to Bullitt, who gave it to Offie with instructions to get it to every Senator and every Congressman on Capitol Hill — which he did. While Offie was doing this, he was arrested one evening in the men's room of Lafayette Park for homosexual solicitation (of a police undercover agent). In those days this was handled like a traffic violation. You posted bond, which was $25, and away you went — which Offie did. That was the end of it. Except that the charge remained on the police blotter.

Bullitt then went to see the President again. As usual, the President said “Oh, Bill, forget it. Don't bother me with this kind of thing.” Bullitt said, “I'm sorry, Mr. President, you can't ignore this any longer. Every Senator and every Congressman on the Hill now knows about it.” And Welles was out the next day. Selden Chapin told me in Budapest three years later that as far as he knew this was the first time in the history of this Republic that this charge was ever used to get someone out of public office. Bullitt thereafter was ignored by the President. And Offie went off to Murphy's office in Caserta, then Frankfurt.

While Offie was in Frankfurt, Merle Cochran, whom I've mentioned above, was engaged in his inspection of the Paris Embassy. He was determined to get something on Offie. At that time all pouches for Europe went first to Paris, and were distributed from there. Cochran impounded all of the pouches, as he was entitled to do. All over Europe staffs were complaining, “Where's our mail?” Cochran doggedly went through every pouch until he found what he was looking for. He came across an envelope addressed to Offie from Tony Biddle (who had been Ambassador to Warsaw before the war). It contained $4,000 in cash, which was a violation of the rules. The charge was made that Offie had violated the rules. He was on the potential Foreign Service promotion list that year, and he was removed therefrom. As a result, Offie resigned from the Foreign Service, just like that.

With his connections (Bob Joyce was one, from Caserta), the next thing you know, Offie shows up as Frank Wisner's closest advisor at OPC. His performance was a masterpiece. He would get up early in the morning and call all his friends in Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome, wherever there was some activity, and pick up all the most current information. By the time he got into the office at 8:30, 8:45, in the morning he knew everything that had gone on. At a staff meeting somebody would report on the situation in Paris, and Offie would say, “Oh, no, no. That's old. Let me tell you what the current situation is”. Wisner was captivated by all this. Furthermore, when the Wisners came down from New York, Polly led a very active social life —

Q:- This was Frank Wisner's wife?

McCARGAR: Yes. She was very active socially, and she needed a cook. So Offie immediately showed up with a cook. Now, when Wisner took Offie on, Security at the CIA (one of their logistical support activities for OPC) refused to give him a clearance. Frank who had the authority to do so, overrode that. Meanwhile, Offie pulled the rug out from under me several times. For example, if, with proper authorization, I engaged in some negotiation with the Hungarian National Committee, Offie would inform them the next day that my conversation “was unauthorized.” So I went to Wisner and said, “I think Offie

is using this operation for his personal aggrandizement." Frank flexed his jaw and arm muscles, and said, "What makes you think I'm going to let him do that?" I answered, "I think he's already doing it." It was agreed that this was not a happy relationship. So Frank assigned me as his Chief of the OPC Station in Vienna. (There was then separate OPC and CIA representation abroad.)

Q: You were saying, Thompson refused -

McCARGAR: At State Tommy Thompson, as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe, refused this assignment on the grounds that career FSO's should not be doing this type of work abroad. What Thompson thought I was doing in Hungary, I don't know. Perhaps he didn't know of it. The Pond was not known to all that many, and State's disdain for, even resentment, of secret operations, including intelligence, was widespread. One example was my old chief, Avra Warren, who, when he became Minister to Finland in 1946 or 1947, refused to allow any CIG or CIA personnel on his staff in Helsinki.

One thing had happened, though, while I was at OPC. I got a call one day from one of Grombach's Colonels. He lived here in Washington in the Kennedy Warren, and he asked to see me. He went through all this thing of picking me up on the corner, so that you're not followed. It turned out that, he said, there was a contract between ITT and the Hungarian Government which was circulating in the U. S. Government for approval at that moment. This was all part of a drama being played out — the Hungarians had arrested an American, named Robert Vogeler, who was the ITT representative in Hungary, on charges of espionage (Vogeler had in fact links to the Army's CIC in Vienna). Instructed by OPC, I went to New York to talk to an ITT lawyer, Chuck Spofford (a Polk, Davis partner, who would become our first Ambassador to NATO) on how we might get Vogeler out. That had some weight in the matter of the terms of the ITT proposed contract with the Hungarian Government.

As it happened, the contract was on my desk at OPC. The Colonel asked if they might see it for a few days. I should have used my head more than I did, but I didn't. I said “Yes, all right.” I got it for him and they returned it in three or four days. A number of years later I discovered that Grombach made his living, not by the Pond, but primarily as a consultant to Phillips of Eindhoven — the great post-war competitors in Europe of ITT.

I'd been used. When I found this out I was outraged.

Meanwhile I had had this hassle with Offie. I'd had the assignment to Vienna, which Thompson refused. Just as that was going on, Security in the CIA had all along the police blotter from Offie's 1944 arrest in the Lafayette Park's men's room for soliciting an officer. They did the same thing to Offie that Offie had done to Sumner Welles. They took it around Capitol Hill. Then they gave the story of Offie's arrest to the papers, and it became public. Offie, I must say, had the intelligent rebuttal to the story. He said, “There's no security problem there. It is well known that I'm a homosexual. Nobody can blackmail me for it”. But this didn't sit very well on the Hill.After I left, Wisner was obliged to put him Offie underground, which he did. The OPC at that time was funding what was called the Free Trade Union Committee, which Jay Lovestone was running, with Irving Brown as the active representative in Europe.

Q: AFL-CIO was very much involved.

McCARGAR: It was still AFL in 1950-51, before the merger, although the CIO had earlier joined the AFL in breaking out of the Communist-dominated WFTU, and forming the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Wisner put Offie in as a contract agent (i.e. undercover) with Lovestone. Then there was a break between Wisner and Offie. I've never known what brought it on. I have seen photocopies from Lovestone's papers (he sold his papers well before his death to the Hoover Institution) of letters to Lovestone from Offie, which were patently subversive of

Wisner's efforts to control the relationship with Lovestone. Perhaps Wisner caught onto what was going on in his regard. Or perhaps Bedell Smith, who had been looking into the case, and had been in touch with the FBI about it, simply ordered Frank to get rid of Offie. So Wisner fired him. Offie's first move on being fired was to go to Wisner's house. He went into the kitchen, he took the cook by the arm, and he led the man out of the house, then and there. Leaving Polly without a cook. Typical Offie. Thereafter he was exceedingly, publicly, and scurrilously bitter about Polly, possibly because he blamed her for the break with Frank.

Offie then went off and formed something called Global Enterprises, which had to do with Italian oil and German steel. (Remember, this was the heyday of “offshore procurement” and the buildup of NATO.) Offie had an office in the Corning Glass building of Fifth Avenue in New York. By that time Bob Murphy had become Vice President of Corning Glass International; his office was on a high floor of that lovely building; Global Enterprises was just around the corner from Bob Murphy. Again, it's one of those things that I've simply never understood. As is known, Offie subsequently died in an air crash on the London to Brussels Sunday night flight. By that time, NATO had already moved to Brussels. Offie was late and called to have the plane held for him. They held it for him. So he got on the plane. The plane took off, it went straight up and then straight down. Everybody on board was killed, including Offie who now has, in the Foreign Service area of Rock Creek Park cemetery, a great big block that says OFFIE on it. So ended that story.

I must say Offie did a very peculiar thing. After my Vienna assignment fell apart, I made a mistake. I should have stayed with OPC, if we're speaking of career moves (though the CIA at that stage had no pension rights), but I felt very loyal to the Foreign Service. I really was very proud to be a Foreign Service Officer. I was admiring of the men that I had known in it. I had a lot of friends in it. And I enjoyed the work, most of the time. So I went back to the Foreign Service. With Wisner's help, I was assigned to the Paris Embassy on East European affairs. When Offie heard that I had been assigned to Paris, he called me and invited me and my wife to lunch and dinner on the same day, with whatever other

guests we would like. We went to lunch (I had had a tooth extracted that morning so I didn't eat very much), and then we went to dinner. He asked what else we would like to do, and I said, “I'd like to go to the circus.” So we all went to the circus. Then he said, “I have an apartment in the Rue de Ponthieu in Paris. You can have it for $100 dollars a month for a while, until you get fully located.” I took it and paid the $100 dollars to some clerk in the Embassy, which I assume went to Bullitt.

And there I was in Paris. End of the great adventures. I had enjoyed my time at the OPC. The work was fascinating. I had a large staff. I had a budget of as many millions as I wanted to spend, and I couldn't spend it all. Even with the Albanian operation. I did plant officers in Greece and in Austria in hopes of later using them to in those areas. I had one amusing experience which should be recorded. I had a young man come in to see me who was to be a potential recruit. I had an idea of putting him in a shipping office in Piraeus in Greece. I mentioned this to him and he firmly rejected it. His explanation: “You've got to give a man a cover he can be proud of!” I realized we were up against a different view of things.

But those plants and the Albanian operation were the end of my OPC service. I went to Paris, to the East European Desk of the Political Section, with great pleasure — only to find that it was a bad move. Here I'd just been in charge of all of these very important matters, and I'd moved at a responsible level. Suddenly I found myself under a man for whom I developed very little respect, who was devious, and pathologically secretive. He wouldn't let me see any of the papers in the office -

Q: Who was this?

MCCARGAR: Landreth Harrison. He gave me minimal assignments and then complained that I wasn't doing anything. But besides exploring the exile communities in France, I did turn out a compendium on the Hungarian immigration in France and one on the Romanian. (These have since been declassified, and are available in the U.S. Archives; one who

recently made use of the Romanian report, coincidentally enough, was Frank Wisner's daughter, as she prepared her doctoral dissertation for Boston University on Romania 1944-48.)

After the first year, Harrison had turned in reports on me which meant that I obviously had to go somewhere else in the Embassy. So I was sent over to COCOM, the Allied Coordinating Committee. I think it has just recently been abolished. COCOM was a Western European and U.S. committee concerned with the export of strategic arms to the Soviet Bloc. Sid Jacques, who was later killed in a air crash in Nepal, was the Chief Delegate, in succession to Nate King. Bob Brandin was part of that group, as was Gardner Ainsworth. who died last year. The French had temporary buildings at that time spilling down from the Trocadero almost to the Pont d'Iena. Thank God they ultimately removed them. They were an eyesore. They were worse than the ones we had here on Constitution Avenue and around the Reflecting Pool.

Q: I remember seeing them. They really turned our stomachs.

McCARGAR: Exactly. Anyway, we would meet there almost every day and go over these detailed lists: what do we do about left-threaded widgets, and what about right-handed earphones. This item and that item.

Q: This was basically trying to keep strategic material out of the hands of the Communist states and armed forces?

McCARGAR: Yes. I respected the purpose of it all.

Meanwhile — this all came out later — I started getting official letters from FP, from Foreign Service Personnel. For example, I was advised that for the period when I was in Hungary I was placed in the lowest 30 percent of my class. Then came a letter from Durbrow, then Chief of Personnel, saying that I was in the lower 10% of my class — this for the period when I was at OPC.

Later I found out what had happened. I should add that Bob Miner, who later became an Ambassador, was then in the Embassy in Paris. Having been in the Embassy at Athens during the Albanian operation, he was one of those who was witting as to what I was doing at OPC. He was assigned to my Selection Board in 1952. I had been promoted in June of 1947, thanks to Arthur Schoenfeld (i.e., before my Pond work). Thereafter, I learned, my record was a blank until I got to Paris. There, after my first year, Harrison had slaughtered me with the support of Phil Bonsal, the Counselor for Political Affairs, who didn't know what I was doing anyway. But Bonsal's way of doing things was automatically to support the section chiefs under him. Here I was, as I say, having done all these very important things, having had this great authority, being a clerk in the office of someone for whom I had no respect. And since I still felt that the assignment was — if only minus Harrison — one that called on my experience, and one that I had requested via Wisner, I didn't feel that I could ask for another one.

Selden Chapin, by that time Ambassador to the Netherlands, invited me up to The Hague. He wanted me to join his staff there. With my genius for doing a strange mixture of right and wrong things, I refused on the grounds, which I held private to myself, that it was not sensible to tie your career to one man too much. I knew that it was also possible that Selden would get into some trouble, which he did eventually. So I refused it. I stayed on in Paris and suffered there — an oxymoron if there ever was one.

Miner was called to my Selection Board, and he told me what had happened. The Boards all had public members. These public members were not cleared for Top Secret and Secret materials — nor were any of the officials members of the Boards cleared for such matters as the Pond or OPC. So all these people would look at my record which said nothing about what I had done for the Pond in Hungary, or what I had done at OPC.

What Bob Miner didn't know was that Chapin had written a letter in 1948 (to Durbrow) noting that I had not been promoted, and saying in effect, “Something's wrong here. This man did things that were thoroughly authorized”. A memo was sent to EUR and

Randy Higgs, who I thought was a friend of mine, replied that EUR had no objection to honors being bestowed upon me, or whatever. But EUR thought the people who had authorized these secret actions should step forward and say that they were responsible. As it happened, the Pond had turned in a magnificent letter of commendation, which to this day I have never seen because, as I found out years later, from a memorandum to Secretary of State Cy Vance, signed by Ben Read as Under Secretary for Management, that commendation " was withheld from my personnel file." No explanation was given by the Under Secretary for this action, and none was asked for by the Secretary of State. My questions about this over the years have simply been ignored by the Department of State.

So there was this long blank in my record, followed by damnation from Harrison (which I had contested, but my reply was not in the file) and a "doing well" from Sid Jacques for my brief period at COCOM. According to Miner, the public members kept saying, "But what does this man do? What has he been doing for these years here? There are four years here that aren't really covered". Obviously my few months in Genoa hadn't contributed to my record at all. The Government members — most of whom, except for Miner, didn't themselves know, as I have mentioned (only that my work was highly classified), said "We can't tell you." The situation became so bad that Jerry Drew, by then Director General of the Foreign Service (and who not only had known me in Budapest, but was witting of both the Pond and OPC) took the extraordinary step of appearing before my Selection Board in his official capacity. A very unusual thing. He spoke to my Board, and said, "You cannot do this to this man. He has done things that we can't tell you about, but they're of great value for the country," and so forth. The result was that I was in the lowest 10 percent of my class for two years running.

I had a cable from Bill Boswell, a friend who was in FP at that time (his brother, an Army officer, and I had been in Moscow together), saying he needed to see me in Washington before a certain date. So I got on a plane. I knew my Paris assignment was almost over. So I flew back and I saw Bill. He said, "You have one more year to regain your standing in the Service, and you can't do it. It's not possible. You can't get from the lowest 10% up

into something that won't select you out in one year.” So I resigned. Presumably I blotted my copy book again, because I resigned in February or March, but I made it effective in October, taking advantage of all my accumulated leave — as you could do in those days. Personnel kept writing me letters saying “Please make it effective now,” and describing their budgetary and other difficulties. My feeling was, “You're kicking me around. Why should I do you a favor?” I let it go to October, when my leave and pay ran out, and that was the end of it. So ended my Foreign Service career. To my sorrow and chagrin, I must say.

Q: I think this also reflects that the Service at this time was, and probably still is today, very uncomfortable with intelligence operations, or however you want to call them. If you can't talk about it, if it's not on paper, it gets —

McCARGAR: It sits badly.

Q: The Service is just not comfortable with those types of things.

McCARGAR: I've done some writing on this problem. Both the CIA and the State Department are monsters. The CIA has a little bit more flexibility, but the real problem is the hostility between the two organizations. For example, I belong to DACOR. It's -

Q: DACOR being Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired.

McCARGAR: Yes. I was there to lunch some years ago and had Foreign Service Officers say, when they found that I had done some work with the CIA, “Well, they're not doing anything that we couldn't do just as well, if not better”. One reaction. The other reaction came from a very close friend of mine from the CIA, who said, years later, “You know, we destroyed the careers of a whole generation of Foreign Service Officers,” and that's true. The CIA were relied upon to do things which in the normal course of events the Foreign Service would have taken care of. So that hostility is there.

Q: Yes, it's there, and I think any historian should be aware of this as they get into this thing. It just hasn't been a good marriage.

McCARGAR: I encountered this twice, in virulent form, once from each side.

When I left the Service I had an idea for a magazine. This was 1954 and, as usual, I picked a bad moment. You may not remember that '54 was a bad year financially. All the people who were angels for publications were not bestowing largess on publications. They'd been wiped out. But my idea was for a magazine, The Interpreter, which would interpret Europe to the American public. George Ball picked this up. I had some connection with Ball from the campaign for Adlai Stevenson. A man named Joseph Retinger, whom I came to know very well later, a Pole, great friend of Conrad, and a most extraordinary character, had gone to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and said “We should form a group which will bring the Americans and Europeans together annually. No leaders, no press, no nothing. Just four days of discussion.” This became what was known as the Bilderberg Group. Prince Bernhard wrote to the White House about this. It came to C. D. Jackson, who handed it out of the White House to George Ball, then with his law firm, Cleary, Gottlieb, saying “You handle this. You set this up.” Which George did. He took my magazine proposal to the first meeting of the Group — at the Bilderberg Hotel in The Netherlands. The answer is typical of how these things go. The Europeans said “Very interesting idea. We think you should pay to explain Europe to America. We'll pay to explain America to Europe.” That was the end of that.

Then I went to the Free Europe Committee. I later found out who it was, but right at the outset somebody from the CIA turned me down. I had an agreement with Wisner that if I ever showed up on a list for anything, he and I would talk before any negatives were given. So I called him and came down to Washington to see him. I was living in New York. Frank apologized, said he had known nothing about this, and brushed it all aside so I that I was taken on by the Free Europe Committee. Whitney Shepardson, who had been number three in the OSS during the war was the President. Splendid man. I've been trying

to help his son write his biography at the moment. There were all kinds of divisions at that time, but I had nothing to do with the Radio. I knew all the people in the Radio, but I was handling the Committee's political and social operations in Europe. First I worked with the Assembly of Captive European Nations, which we had set up as an offshoot of the Committee. We eventually got a building right across from the United Nations, where we put up all the flags of the Soviet-occupied nations. You have no idea how easy it is to do a demonstration in New York if you know how to do it. We'd get 5,000 people out there screaming in front of the UN for liberty and the right cause.

Then I was sent to Europe as the European Director for the political and social programs. Actually, the work was first divided between Western Europe and Central Europe, with Harold Shantz, whom you may remember from the Foreign Service, and as Minister in Romania. He was in charge of Central Europe, but he left after six or eight months, so I took over the whole thing. It was fascinating work at a fascinating time. Nothing secret about it, except, of course, the real origin of our funds. The actual operations were completely overt. I was working with all the East European exile communities in Western Europe. I was dealing with all the West European political parties. I was dealing with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Brussels. I was dealing with the Council of Europe. I got it fixed up so that there was an annual meeting of what they called the Council's Committee on Non-represented Nations, headed by a Swedish parliamentarian named Wistrand, a very nice man who felt strongly about the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. They'd have an annual meeting at which the Poles and Hungarians, and all the rest that we were supporting, would show up. The exile politicians — Social Democrats, the Peasant Parties (the Green International), Centrists, the East European equivalents of Christian Democrats — would have two or three days talking to the Council. A very useful exercise. As I say, I was very pleased.

My direct boss at that time was located in New York, a man named Yarrow. Another very interesting character. (Offie used to call Yarrow Allen Dulles's “hatchet man.”) Yarrow was born in Russia, of a Russian-Jewish family which had money. He had been converted to

Orthodox Christianity. He came to the United States and in due course entered into the practice of law in New York. He then became a Presbyterian. He made some connection with Sullivan, Cromwell, the Dulles firm, and then was on Tom Dewey's staff for quite a while.

Q: When he was District Attorney?

McCARGAR: District Attorney. Yarrow was one of his men. He went into the OSS during the war and was in London. Actually, Allen Dulles was godfather of his son. His second son by his second wife. His son by his first wife is Peter Yarrow, who is part of that singing group Peter, Paul, and Mary, who I don't think was ever on very good terms with his father. Yarrow, a Vice President of Free Europe Committee, was my chief. I was told by Yarrow, “I want you to operate on a big scale. I want you to stay in the best hotels, I want you to make a mark,” and so on. So I did. It was very easy for me to do. I had no trouble with that kind of assignment. Then, after a couple of years of nothing but the highest plaudits, he said “Lyman Kirkpatrick [then Inspector General of the CIA] is going to come to your Paris office and look it over.” I said, “Good.” I'd met Kirkpatrick once. When I went to Vienna everybody agreed I needed a good strong administrator under me. I could do the politics, but I wasn't famous as an administrator. So I stole a man named Ed Applewhite from Kirkpatrick's office. Whether he held that against me or not, I don't know. But in the end he never came to examine my office.

What next happened was a man named Cloyce K. Huston, who had resigned from the Foreign Service to become Yarrow's deputy, came to Paris for a few days, and on his return to New York wrote an unbelievably scurrilous report about me. I came back to New York and I was told about this by Yarrow, who said, “You can't come into the office.” I replied, “You can't do it that way. I must see that report, and I must have a chance to reply to it.” He gave me the report, which I found to be purely a shocking invention. I answered it, and then went to see Huston. To him I said, “I think I've demolished your report.” He said, “You certainly did.” Although Yarrow swore up and down to me (he was

a consummate liar, as I knew from experience) that Washington had nothing whatsoever to do with all this, Yarrow had in fact been instructed by Washington to get rid of me, and Huston's report was part of the mechanism they hoped would work.

It took me some years to find out what had really transpired. Lyman Kirkpatrick — as you know may have noticed he died recently — had fallen victim to polio in his thirties. The rest of his life he was in a wheelchair and he became very embittered. Beyond that, Kirkpatrick's only interest in life was Kirkpatrick. It wasn't the CIA. He felt, as the years went by, that he should have been named Director of the CIA. For example, when John McCone was made Director of Central Intelligence a couple of years later, Kirkpatrick, longtime Inspector General of the CIA, wrote a scandalous report blaming Allen Dulles for the Bay of Pigs. He took this out to the airport and gave it confidentially to McCone, who was going out to California before he came back to take over. McCone, who was a straight shooter, got out to California, having read this thing on the plane, and called Dulles. He told Dulles, “You've got a guy there who's really trying to sink you. How can you let this go on?” In other words, McCone had no faith in Kirkpatrick, and eventually got rid of him.

Kirkpatrick had three hates in life. First was Frank Wisner. I don't know why, but he did. Kirkpatrick in time published three books about the CIA, in which Wisner's name never appeared. This was a very tricky thing to pull off, because Wisner was fundamental to the early years of the CIA, not just OPC. Secondly, Kirkpatrick loathed Foreign Service Officers. Thirdly, he couldn't abide John Grombach, of the Pond, and anyone who had had anything to do with the Pond. As the only list of Pond personnel that Kirkpatrick had was entirely made up of FSO's, perhaps that explained his prejudice against the Foreign Service. Obviously, I fitted all three categories to perfection. (It was Kirkpatrick who had attempted to block my Free Europe appointment — and had been overruled by Wisner.)

In 1958, just when Kirkpatrick was to inspect my office in Paris, Wisner had his breakdown from the psychological problem that was to lead to his suicide seven years later (two weeks after I had an hour's telephone conversation with him). With Wisner out of the way,

Kirkpatrick issued orders that I was to be removed — actually, as a security risk because of my Pond work.

But there was a relevant and important point of which Kirkpatrick was ignorant. If Yarrow had not lied so baldly to me, if he had told me that my dismissal had been cooked up in Washington, if I had known this, I could have gone directly at that time to Allen Dulles, who would have put an end to my ouster. In 1954, visiting Washington from New York, I had lunch with Angleton. He raised with me my Pond service. I said, “Jim, how do you know about that?” Angleton then told me that the CIA had taken over the Pond from State, and had been given the list of all FSO's who had worked for Grombach (but not of the Pond's outside agents, apparently). He explained, “We're having a lot of trouble with Grombach. He's being terribly difficult. He won't give us this. He won't do that.” I replied to this with an explanation to Angleton of the contract for ITT, and my later discovery that I had been used for Grombach's real purpose, his Phillips of Eindhoven connection, and that I hadn't gotten over that yet. Jim said, “Will you continue in contact with Grombach, and tell us what he's doing. This is for the Director” — meaning Allen Dulles. I said yes.

I was living in New York and was looking for work in case my magazine project failed, so I had lunch, about once a month, with Grombach. He was a very boastful man. He confided in me that he was in close touch with Senator Joe McCarthy, and that he was trying to get McCarthy to attack the CIA. Grombach had a long history, almost obsessive, of hostility to the CIA. He had all kinds of griefs about the Coca Cola thing in Morocco, which I knew nothing about. But that was just one of his stories. He kept trying to persuade McCarthy, who had about finished destroying the State Department, to move next on the CIA — and telling me as the plot unfolded. So I just kept reporting all this to Washington. Dulles was able to take appropriate steps, so that, as we know, McCarthy went after the Army. I was asked to come down to Washington to see Allen Dulles. I went out to his house with Angleton. We spent an hour. Dulles repeatedly expressed his gratitude: “You've saved the Republic,” and other fulsome praises. Had I known what was going on in 1958 when

Kirkpatrick had me ousted, and told Dulles this, the Director would obviously have stopped the action immediately.

Aside from all this skullduggery, of course, the pertinent point for this recital is Kirkpatrick's active hostility to the Foreign Service. But that hostility worked both ways.

In 1977, I was in a rather difficult situation. I needed a job, and my good friend Irving Brown, European Representative of the AFL-CIO, while in Washington, went to see his very good friend, Phil Habib, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs. According to Irving, Habib was well disposed in the matter, and Irving sent me word in France that I should write to a man in the Department named Clayton McManaway, whom I didn't know, and just lay out the whole thing. So I wrote an explanation of what had occurred in 1953 (with 22 enclosures: I had all the pertinent documents). I sent it to McManaway, and never got so much as an acknowledgment. I came, with some difficulty, to Washington, and called at the Department to pursue the matter, because I was by now advised that Habib's word in the Department was “Give the man a job.” Walter Stoessel, then Ambassador to Germany, of course was also backing me.

I called at the Department and was kept waiting an hour-and-a- half at the diplomatic entrance, until some junior clerk finally came down. He said “We're cutting personnel. This is just not the time,” and so on. So I reported this to Irving Brown. By that time Tom Donahue, who had been on my staff in Paris, was Executive Assistant to George Meany (Tom later became Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and then, briefly, President). This was now the Carter Administration. Tom Donahue called Landon Butler in the White House. Butler got in touch with Marc Ginsberg, a political appointee who was Richard Moose's assistant. Moose was the Deputy Under Secretary for Administration. (This is the period when “administration” was giving way to “management.”) Ginsberg (now Ambassador to Morocco) went to work on this.

Finally, after months, I was called into what became a total shock to me. I can't even describe today what it did to me. I was taken into a room where Joan Clark, who by that time had taken Moose's place -

Q: She was Director General of the Foreign Service.

McCARGAR: She wasn't yet. She was taking Moose's place in an Acting capacity; he had gone on to something else in or about Africa. Then she was succeeded by Ben Read, a political appointee who had been Executive Secretary under Dean Rusk. Read promptly got himself designated Under Secretary of State for Management.

In this meeting to which I was summoned, there was Joan Clark, a young man from Habib's office, Marc Ginsberg (who had given me no warning of what to expect, except that I should tell my story), and two other people. This was not a discussion nor an interview. This was an interrogation, such as you do with criminals. Everybody was stone-faced. After I had told the story of my Foreign Service career and the 1951 and 1952 Selection Boards, a single question was posed (I think by Joan Clark — whom Walter Stoessel, who was one of her sponsors, had told me was “personally sympathetic” to my problem: I never saw any evidence whatsoever of it; on the contrary she was the haughtiest and coldest of a cold room; when this comedy was over, I happened to pass her in the hall — she gave me no sign of recognition, not even the minor courtesy of a greeting). The question was, “Mr. McCargar, why didn't you bring all this up in 1953?” I was utterly astounded. We're now in 1977. But some of these people had some seniority. They were not that young. That they didn't understand what the situation of the State Department was in 1953, with Senator McCarthy having run riot through those corridors, and Scott McLeod, from Styles Bridges' Senate office, in charge of both Personnel and Security, was beyond my ken.I had dined in Washington in 1953, when people were being fired right and left. And I made one of those witticisms that you really shouldn't make. It was, “You know, they're making a great mistake by firing all the homosexuals in the State Department. They're getting rid of some of the best brains in the place.” This was

reported by someone at the dinner (believe it or not; and I have the documents in my file) to McLeod, who immediately ordered a security investigation of me on the grounds of this remark. It only ended when he was informed that I had resigned.

Here I was, as I say, in this interrogation. “Why didn't you...” I was so stunned by this that I failed to say the obvious, “Don't any of you remember what Senator McCarthy was doing to the State Department at that time?. Had I come forward in 1953 and said that I did this for the Pond in 1946 and 1947; I did that and that for OPC in 1948-50, and so on, I would have been persona non grata everywhere in Washington for revealing what were still very closely held state secrets. I would have ended up on McCarthy's list for revealing state secrets,” and so forth. That these people, ostensibly responsible officers of the Department, didn't know that was beyond me.

The matter finally went up to Ben Read, who, contrary to the recommendations from Ginsberg and from the White House to take me on, refused. Ginsberg has told me since he doesn't understand why Read made that decision, unless it was to curry favor with the FP people further down the chain, who fundamentally didn't want me back in because I had done the unforgivable and resigned from the Service. (I don't pretend to the same level, but Allen Dulles and David Bruce, both resigned from the Service?) So that was over.

But in 1987, ten years later, I took this matter up with George Vest, then Director General of the Foreign Service and Chief of Personnel. (George in the early 1960's was on the staff of Dirk Stikker, former Dutch Foreign Minister and then Secretary General of NATO, and in 1964, when Stikker retired from NATO for health reasons, I was ghostwriter of his memoirs — which brought about a lasting friendship.) Vest, as far as I'm concerned, even in retirement, remains one of the great people of the Foreign Service. But, of course, as he told me, “I'm Director General, but I don't have any real power. You have to understand.” I told him briefly my story, showed him that I had all the pertinent documents, and said “I

just want some recognition. I don't want a job now. I've made out all right. But I do want some recognition for what I did for the Foreign Service."

So George took it up with the State Department Honor Awards Committee and then he wrote me a letter with a negative response. I later saw George at a cocktail party, and I kept my distance from him. But he came over to me and we talked for a long time. He said, "I put this whole thing down with the Honor Awards Committee, and they said they have neither the resources nor the time to go back 40 years on any subject." (That same week the Army delivered an overdue medal to a surviving veteran of World War I, out in Wisconsin.)

George Vest then wrote me another letter, which included the statement, "You are one of the unsung heroes of the Service. Your problem is that all this work you did was secret".

I think that's probably as good an explanation as any.

Q: I think it probably is.

McCARGAR: It may be a good explanation, but it is also a deplorable one. It does no honor to the CIA, which had been fully informed of all this in 1977, and denied any responsibility, on the ground that I had been a Foreign Service Officer. And it is, in my view, an even more scathing commentary on the Department of State and the Foreign Service.

As Endre Marton, the AP correspondent at State for twenty years, whom I had known since Budapest, said in 1977 to a senior Department official. "The CIA says it is State's responsibility. State says it is the CIA's. Aren't you just whipsawing this man?" The answer? "That may be," said the official. "But that's the way it is."

End of interview